

Tea Project

SINCE 2016

TEACHING IN ENGLISH
FOR ACADEMICS
-ULB-



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**INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES
TO SUPPORT CONTENT
LEARNING**

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2.1 WARM UP INTO ENGLISH

Prepare an activity or critical question on a slide ready for when your students come into the room. This should aim to review previous material or to introduce them to some of the concepts that will follow in the lecture. This also means that you are using the ‘empty’ time when everyone is arriving and finding their seat.

- ◆ Questions should be specific and focused.
- ◆ Ask for a specific number of points
(‘Give three reasons why...’).
- ◆ Use sentence prompts
(‘The functional method can be defined as _____.’).
- ◆ Avoid general and open questions, such as ‘What did we do last week?’

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To activate students’ language and knowledge.
- ◆ To prepare for the material to come.
- ◆ To move into an “English” space.

2.2 THINK-PAIR-SHARE / PYRAMID DISCUSSION

Students think about a question alone for one minute, and then they discuss it with their neighbour for two minutes. The pair of students can then work with another pair to produce a final answer. Finally, they report back to the class and discuss with the teacher.

You can also allow students to discuss in a language other than English before feeding back to the wider group.

Ask specific, focused questions that you write on the board or on your slide. This gives the students good language models and gives them visual support to understand the question.

You can also ask the students to report on what they have heard from somebody else rather than their own views.

You don't have to take feedback from all of the groups! Instead, go and listen to a few of them as they work.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To activate language and knowledge.
- ◆ To encourage critical analysis and deepen understanding.
- ◆ To reduce the stress of speaking in front of a large audience.
- ◆ To widen discussion and go beyond interaction between the teacher and one student.

2.3 ENTRY/EXIT TICKET

As they enter the classroom, give the students a question or problem that will be addressed during the class. Ask them to think about it for a minute or two and then collect answers either verbally or orally.

At the end of the lesson, the students give you their answer on a piece of paper (or online with *Wooclap*). This could be the same as the entry ticket or a new question based on the content of the lesson. This helps you know what students think of a question/problem and what they have learnt during the lesson.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Entry ticket:

What is global warming?

Exit ticket:

- a) What is global warming? (i.e. how much more do they know after the lecture?)
- b) How is global warming impacted by political decisions taken at national and local levels? (i.e. how have they applied their initial knowledge to a new context?)

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To focus attention on a specific topic.
- ◆ Support for note taking and preparation for self-study.
- ◆ To recall/check background information relevant to the lesson.
- ◆ To reflect on a topic.
- ◆ To collect feedback and assess learning.

2.4 CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENTS

Use several large pieces of paper and write a statement on each one (it works well if some statements are quite controversial). Students rotate (individually or in groups) and mark on a scale whether they agree or disagree and by how much.

In large groups in a lecture theatre, you can rotate small pieces of paper between groups of around 10 students.

Use the papers as a starting point for discussion.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To reflect on a topic.
- ◆ To activate prior knowledge.
- ◆ To create opportunities for low stress oral interaction.
- ◆ To widen the discussion.
- ◆ To encourage critical analysis.

2.5 ONE-MINUTE PAPER

The students have to write about an idea/concept or an answer to a question for one minute. This could be done at any moment during the lesson.

Even though you may not be able to read all the papers, collecting them will give a purpose to the task and will also allow you to read a few. Select good examples and share them with the class the following week. Alternatively, start the next lecture/lesson with a misconception check, addressing an area that many students didn't fully understand.

You could also adapt this to have students make a graphical representation of how ideas link together or vice versa.

Depending on your students, it might be worthwhile allowing them to do this in French first and then repeating in English afterwards.

You can also extend this activity to provide students with practice exam questions.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To form a concise summary of what has been learned.
- ◆ To improve writing skills.
- ◆ To encourage critical analysis and deepen understanding.
- ◆ Exam practice.

2.6 QUESTION CARDS

Ask students to write their own question related to the content of the lesson on a card. Collect all of the cards, shuffle them and create a quiz. This might need to take place the following week. Students could also write exam questions on the material they have just covered in class.

You could enhance this activity by asking students to write questions that reflect different levels of knowledge:

- ◆ Low order questions to define a term or give an example.
- ◆ Higher order questions to explain relationships between concepts or apply knowledge to a new situation.

You could also ask the students to write their question on a small card and pass them all around. Students tick the card if they share the same question. You can then return to these questions in the next lecture.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To review previous knowledge.
- ◆ To engage more deeply with the content.
- ◆ To enable you to check comprehension across the group.
- ◆ To develop an understanding of the style of exam questions that are likely to come up.

2.7 JIGSAW ACTIVITIES

In small groups, students receive one stage/step/part of a process, etc. After deciding what this step consists of, they exchange with other groups in order to reconstruct the whole process. This could also be done with an article that has been cut into different paragraphs.

As this is going on, you can move around the room and discuss with different groups.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To structure content.
- ◆ To check comprehension and reasoning.
- ◆ To work collaboratively.
- ◆ To promote low stress oral exchanges in English.
- ◆ To enable you to assess understanding.

2.8 EXAMPLE CATEGORISATION

Provide students with various categories as a way of grouping data or ideas. Give them a set of examples or data and ask them to organise the examples according to the categories they belong to. The students can then be asked to provide their own examples or applications of those categories.

This kind of activity is probably best done on paper, possibly with the different examples or data on separate small pieces of paper. It might be useful to provide some initial examples to categorise before asking the students to give their own.

As they are working, you can discuss difficult examples or those which cross boundaries and are not easily categorisable.

for example:

There are 3 models of diversity management

- ◆ republican
- ◆ multiculturalism
- ◆ differential exclusion

The teacher gave 5 features of each model in short sentences printed on small pieces of paper. The students each took a piece of paper and decided which model it belonged to.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To map concrete examples onto theories or concepts.
- ◆ To encourage students to give their own examples.
- ◆ To promote low stress oral interaction.

2.9 FORCED DEBATE/ DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

As students come into the classroom/auditorium, ask those who agree with a proposition to sit on the left and those who oppose it to sit on the right. Then, ask them to explain their views (or the views of those on the other side of the room). This could be done orally or also by asking small groups of students to write down their thoughts and reasons.

If appropriate, you could also repeat this exercise at the end of the session.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To encourage critical analysis.
- ◆ To check comprehension and reasoning.
- ◆ To promote low stress oral interaction.

2.10 GRAFFITI WALL

Ask a question or pose a problem which has been written on the board or a poster. Students think and write their answers on post-its (alone or in groups). They come to the board and post their ideas. This activity serves as a brainstorming session.

You can also put the students in groups and ask them to manage the organisation of the ideas themselves.

Wooclap and Socrative offer possibilities for doing this online, including options for word clouds, word walls.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To think about content and generate a lot of ideas.
- ◆ To activate/review prior knowledge.
- ◆ To work collaboratively.
- ◆ To ensure wide participation across the class.
- ◆ To provide an opportunity for low stress oral interaction.

2.11 CASE STUDIES

Case studies are scenarios where the students can apply concepts learned in class to real-life situations. They are often presented in narrative form and often involve problem solving and links to course readings/materials.

Students need to analyse the case, report on it orally or in writing and should be prepared to answer questions.

Make sure that you provide a structure for analysis and questions.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To encourage the integration of theory and practice.
- ◆ To make the content more concrete and related to the real world.
- ◆ To give opportunities in class to actively use the reading done at home.

2.12 QUIZZES/OPINION POLLS

Quizzes help determine the level of understanding of students and can generate starting points for discussion. The questions can take different forms:

- ◆ Multiple choice
- ◆ Sentence completion
- ◆ Matching exercises
- ◆ Rating exercises
- ◆ Opinion polls

You can also ask students to answer on their own the first time and then to discuss it with a partner/group before answering a second time.

Quizzes can be done on paper or interactively with websites like *Wooclap* or *Socrative*. Students can even be given sheets of different colored paper which they will raise depending on their answer.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To check comprehension.
- ◆ To give students an opportunity to reflect on course material.
- ◆ To summarize main ideas.

2.13 LINKING LECTURES TO READING

If you have set reading tasks to be completed before the lecture, it is important to make active links to this reading during the lecture. It also helps you to identify the areas that students have misunderstood, meaning you can adapt your teaching to take account of this.

Ask students to complete short activities on the Université Virtuelle before the lecture (e.g. word definitions, MCQs).

Multiple choice or true/false questions at the beginning of a lecture can also be a quick way to check understanding.

You could also ask the students to write a series of questions about an article.

You could also distribute titles which paraphrase the material in each paragraph. Students match the title to the section.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To push more students to actually complete the compulsory reading!
- ◆ To deepen content understanding through more active engagement with reading material.
- ◆ To enable you to check comprehension.
- ◆ To summarize main ideas.

2.14 SKELETON NOTES

Students are provided with a set of lecture notes that has gaps where selected key details and formulae should be. They fill in these gaps during the lecture. This might include charts, graphs, diagrams and maps which need lines drawn, axis labelled, data values added, etc. These can help to balance the potential cognitive overload that comes with learning new language and content at the same time.

Skeleton notes can be very effective but they take time to build. The TEA Project team can help you with this so do get in touch if you are interested in developing this for your course.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To signpost major concepts.
- ◆ To reduce the writing load.
- ◆ To highlight and focus on key terms.

2.15 MEMORY MATRIX

We memorise less information when working in a second language and so it is important to give students opportunities to repeat and review material already covered.

During your lecture, ask the students to look at a diagram or a definition for a minute and then ask them to reproduce it on their own.

If you want the students to label diagrams, give them a copy on paper to avoid wasting time and to ensure you get to the heart of the area you want to explore.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To signpost the key terms and ideas.
- ◆ To encourage memorisation through the use of repetition.
- ◆ To give opportunities to use key language.

2.16 CALCULATION FEEDBACK CYCLE

Give an example on paper of a completed calculation. Before explaining the various stages yourself, ask the students to identify the steps that have been taken, decisions made, etc. They can work in pairs or small groups, identifying the parts of the calculation they are more confident with and those parts they are unsure of. They can share this with other pairs or with the teacher.

You can also give calculations that contain a mistake. Ask the students to find it and explain the problem.

Use multiple choice options to give various possible solutions to a problem.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To prime students to understand the full process before a demonstration.
- ◆ To engage critical thinking.
- ◆ To encourage collaboration for understanding.
- ◆ To encourage memorisation through the use of repetition.

2.17 DEFINING FEATURES MATRIX

Prepare a handout with a matrix of two columns and several rows. At the top of the columns, list two distinct concepts that have potentially confusing similarities or that are new to the students and you want them to compare (e.g. behaviorist vs. constructivist models of learning; hurricanes vs. tornadoes).

Below, list the important characteristics of both concepts but in no particular order. Ask the students to use the matrix to identify which characteristics belong to each of the two concepts. Collect their responses and you'll quickly find out which characteristics are giving your students the most trouble.

You can adapt this to give a list of features and simply ask students to indicate if they PRESENT or ABSENT in each case.

This could be used as a revision activity with no characteristics provided.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To enable students to quickly compare complex systems.
- ◆ To allow the teacher to assess student understanding.
- ◆ To encourage discussion, negotiation and debate.

2.18 IDEA EXCHANGE

This activity involves students *giving* others their questions and insights and *getting* those from other students. The students write 'get one' on one side of a piece of paper and 'give one' on the other side. At the end of the class, they write down four insights or questions on the side marked 'give one'. They then exchange with their neighbours, collecting their contributions on the other side of their paper.

You can collect these papers in to get a view on what the students have learned and where they still have questions.

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To review the material covered in the class.
- ◆ To enable you to understand what has been learned.
- ◆ To encourage low stress oral interaction.

