Tea Project

SINCE 2016

TEACHING IN ENGLISH FOR ACADEMICS
-ULB-

3

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

CONTENTS

3.1 KEY TERMS

Provide a glossary of key technical terms that need to be understood and used.

Refer to this list progressively throughout your teaching, ensuring that you give opportunities for students to explore the meaning of the words and to use them in context.

- Choose 3 key words from the previous week's lecture.
- Ask students to write a definition.
- Ask students to translate key terms into their other language/s.
- Give multiple choice definitions of key terms.
- Give 'fill in the blank' exercises with key terms.

OBJECTIVES:

- To engage with key terms on a repeated basis.
- To engage with key terms in an active way.

3.2 EXTENDING LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE

In order for students to develop the language knowledge and skills required, they need opportunities to explore language in a low-stress but cognitively demanding environment.

Have students check their answers with their neighbours before feeding back to the larger group, or use an online tool, such as *Padlet* or *Wooclap*, to allow everyone to share with each other.

- **Sentence gap**: write a sentence with one word open. Students speculate on what could complete the gap.
- Give an **example sentence** with a choice of 3 synonyms for one of the words. Discuss the differences between them. ('The data suggests / indicates / proves that…')
- Give students **'sentence starters'** as prompts in discussions. ('Economic indicators suggest that…')

OBJECTIVES:

- To actively use new vocabulary in context.
- To support the use of new vocabulary by providing examples.

3.3 PERSONAL GLOSSARY

Encourage students to note down new vocabulary and phrases that they think will be useful to them. Give time in lectures for them to add to this and possibly share words and phrases each week. You could also make the personal glossary part of your final evaluation.

You can ask the students to explore a word by reflecting on a number of categories:

> ### 1. GRAMMATICAL CATEGORY
> (noun, verb, etc.)

> ### 2. A DEFINITION
> (or translation to their language if appropriate)

> ### 3. AN EXAMPLE IN CONTEXT
> (a meaningful sentence or paragraph of text)

> ### 4. GRAMMATICAL PATTERNS YOU OBSERVE IN TEXTS OR DICTIONARIES
> (e.g. which prepositions are used with the word?)

> ### 5. COLLOCATIONS YOU OBSERVE IN TEXTS OR DICTIONARIES

(Adapted from A Riley and P Sours (2014), Common Law Legal English and Grammar. A Contextual Approach, Oxford: Hart Publishing, pp. 16-17)

OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ To focus on the dual language/content challenge of the course.
- ◆ To encourage personalised reflection and language development.

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3.4 FILMS & YOUTUBE

When you are playing a film clip, watch with subtitles in English if possible and/or provide a transcript of the spoken text.

- Always watch films at least twice and if possible ask the students to watch the films before the lecture.
- Before playing the film clip, give the students a task that will focus their attention and guide their understanding.

  - Leave gaps in the transcript for students to complete.
  - Give a list of keywords to listen for.
  - Write the key questions separately, ideally on a piece of paper.
  - Ask your questions before and after watching the film.

OBJECTIVES:

- To reduce the challenge of learning new language and content at the same time.
- To give multiple opportunities to access new language.
- To give opportunities to notice new terms in English.

3.5 WORD BANKS FOR WRITING

When you set your students a writing task, provide them with a bank of useful expressions, key terms and starter phrases. This helps to transform passive vocabulary to active vocabulary.

General writing terms are available on a flyer from the *TEA Project* or it can be downloaded from our website. We can also help you create lists specific to your course.

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES INCLUDE

◆ *The Only Academic Phrasebook You'll Ever Need: 600 Examples of Academic Language,* Luiz Otavio Barros, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

◆ *The Student Phrase Book: Vocabulary for Writing at University,* Jeanne Godfrey, Red Globe Press

OBJECTIVES:
◆ To provide visual reminders for new language.
◆ To extend vocabulary.

3.6 SPEAKING PREPARATION

Some students will always be very reluctant to speak in English. Reduce this pressure by giving them time to prepare what they are going to say.

◆ Pair work before discussing in the wider class.
◆ Write a one minute paper (in any language) before discussing.
◆ Provide sentence starters to support discussion or debate.
◆ Depending on your students' language level, you can allow discussion in any language to ensure that a maximum number of students participate.

OBJECTIVES:

◆ To reduce stress.
◆ To give time to prepare spoken interaction.

3.7 ACTIVE READING SYLLABUS

Students may find it difficult to engage with compulsory reading in English. They read more slowly, memorise less easily, and challenging language can make it hard for them to get an overview of the arguments. Their reading can end up as somewhat superficial, and indeed many students will completely avoid it.

An active reading syllabus supplements each reading task with a series of activities that are designed to help the students to focus on the key themes, to understand and learn new vocabulary and to come to your class having engaged with the material.

If the tasks are to be done before the lecture, they should probably focus on appropriating new material. You can also ask students to add to their answers during the course, meaning you can move into more analytical types of questions.

Questions/activities for pre-reading might cover areas such as:
◆ definitions of key terms;
◆ matching words to definitions;
◆ labelling paragraphs;
◆ structured questions to help check understanding;
◆ giving examples from their own knowledge.

Contact the *TEA Project* for help in developing your own active reading syllabus.

OBJECTIVES:
◆ To enable more engaged active reading.
◆ To ensure more students do the pre-reading for a course.

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3.8 CONCEPT EXPANDER

Not only do we want students to remember key concepts, we want them to be able to go beyond a superficial understanding of the vocabulary. A concept expander encourages the students to link new concepts to related words and potential consequences within their specific content learning. Graphically organised, the concept expander may look like this:

TERM	Carbon footprint

KEY WORDS	◆ Responsibility ◆ Choice ◆ Sustainability ◆ Damage ◆ Lifestyle

SUMMARY STATEMENT	Each person chooses to live a sustainable lifestyle and takes responsibility for reducing damage to the environment.

CONSEQUENCES	◆ Ecological balance (less extreme weather) ◆ More secure future (cleaner air) ◆ Global citizenship (thinking globally, acting locally ◆ Well-being (fewer respiratory illnesses)

SUMMARY STATEMENT	The citizens of the globe will have a more secure future if they work to reduce each person's carbon footprint and increase ecological balance and well-being.

(Adapted from P Mehisto, D Marsh and M Jesús Frigols. (2008), Uncovering CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning in Bilingual and Multilingual Education, London: Macmillian Education, p. 149)

OBJECTIVES:

◆ To encourage language and content development.
◆ To support language in context.
◆ To use key terms actively.

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