

**INTEGRATING THE SIX SKILLS  
IN EVERY ESL/ EFL CLASS**

**BY**

**MONICA M. CATRAMADO**

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Project Advisor

Project Reader

## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of integrating listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammaring and vocabulary in the ESL/EFL classroom.

Through this paper, not only will the reader gain an understanding of how to design a theme or content-based syllabus, which integrates all six skills, but also he/she will find numerous activities that will help develop those skills in every student.

Readers will also be shown how students can learn another language and develop these skills through practical every day topics and different materials, which depend on the students' developmental stage of learning, stage of knowledge and interest.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>                  | 1  |
| Personal Background                     | 2  |
| <b>II. LANGUAGE SKILLS</b>              |    |
| <b>A. LISTENING</b>                     |    |
| How to teach Listening Comprehension    | 4  |
| <u>Conclusion</u>                       | 11 |
| <b>B. READING</b>                       |    |
| The pre-reading stage                   | 14 |
| The while-reading stage                 | 16 |
| The post-reading stage                  | 16 |
| Reading material                        | 17 |
| Ways of Reading                         | 18 |
| <u>Conclusion</u>                       | 18 |
| <b>C. SPEAKING</b>                      |    |
| How to approach Pronunciation           | 19 |
| How to approach Speaking                | 22 |
| How to approach the Conversation Skills | 23 |
| <u>Conclusion</u>                       | 24 |
| <b>D. WRITING</b>                       | 25 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| The Controlled-to-Free Approach          | 26 |
| The Free-Writing Approach                | 27 |
| The Paragraph-Pattern Approach           | 27 |
| The Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach | 28 |
| The Communicative Approach               | 28 |
| <u>Conclusion</u>                        | 30 |
| <br>                                     |    |
| <b>E. GRAMMARING</b>                     | 31 |
| The learning Process                     | 32 |
| The teaching Process                     | 32 |
| Some suggested activities                | 33 |
| <u>Conclusion</u>                        | 40 |
| <br>                                     |    |
| <b>F. VOCABULARY</b>                     | 41 |
| <u>Conclusion</u>                        | 44 |
| <br>                                     |    |
| <b>III. INTEGRATED APPROACHES</b>        |    |
| Sample lesson Plans: Lesson Plan 1       | 45 |
| Personal Experience on Sample Class 1    | 51 |
| Lesson Plan 2                            | 52 |
| Personal Experience on Sample Class 2    | 56 |
| Lesson Plan 3                            | 57 |
| Personal experience on Sample Class 3    | 62 |
| Lesson Plan 4                            | 63 |

|                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Personal Experience on Sample Class 4 | 69        |
| <b>IV CONCLUSION</b>                  | <b>70</b> |
| <b>References</b>                     | <b>73</b> |

# I

## INTRODUCTION

The numerous methods of teaching foreign languages may sometimes make teachers, especially those who are just stepping into the field of Education, feel frustrated. Not knowing which one to apply or how to do it when they only sympathize with certain techniques is a fact that can have positive effects on them or negative ones. Moreover, not 'any' method can be applied to 'any' group. There are many factors, like age, number of students, personalities, speed of learning, which may influence on the way the teacher will lead the group to fulfill his/her goal.

Some teachers learn, through time and experience, how to deal with all those drawbacks, but some others find it difficult, especially when they think they are supposed to be on only one track.

Moreover, learning a language implies the development of all the six skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammaring and vocabulary). Therefore, how can teachers help students develop them when in fact they do not even know how and where to start?

Through this paper, I will analyze the importance and ways of teaching each of the six skills in every class, and teachers will easily identify a mixture of techniques pertaining to different approaches.

The main purpose of this writing is, based on my own experience, to help teachers select the techniques and activities they can adapt to their own approach and justify the

reason why they are making such a selection. This will confirm their self-confidence in what they are doing and the way they are doing it.

### **PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

I have been teaching English as a foreign language for more than twelve years but I admit that, despite my experience, I still consider myself a learner. Every class I learn new things, not only from my own classes and from my students, but also from myself. And this is the enchantment of being a teacher: we never stop learning and therefore, never stop growing. But for this personal and professional growth, teachers need to be open-minded and accept the fact that sometimes their work does not depend only on themselves but on their background.

I gained most of my experience as a language teacher in my mother country, Argentina. I have taught English to students ranging from four years old to adults, and from beginners to advanced level. And despite all this, every class is a box full of surprises. Teachers may plan a class to the best of their ability, select the material and activities according to the students' age, level and interest, but they cannot foresee what will happen when putting it into practice.

However, it is essential to focus on a strategy of work, as only that will help teachers achieve their goals. Likewise, having an approach of their own, with certain principles as a basis, will help them face any class regardless of age, place, amount of students and level of language competence.

During these years, I have based my work on certain principles that I consider essential to be taken into account when teaching a foreign language. It was during my



Teaching Practicum and with my supportive advisor that I discovered the importance of these principles. Her presence in my classes and our work together, helped me find the answer to most of the questions that had been worrying me for a long time.

My concern was based on my students' lack of production and I could not understand the reason why the situation was like that, when the material I worked with covered all the grammar, vocabulary and the necessary practice for the development of the rest of the skills.

I had to adjust some things but the most significant step I took was changing from an activity based curriculum to a topic based curriculum, and always having the six skills integrated and working as the main support.

To my surprise, the simple fact of reorganizing the material in such a way that the content of the six skills was related, changed the product amazingly. Students started understanding the listening material better after having worked on the vocabulary and the readings based on the same topic. And, of course, their written and oral production improved considerably after this process.

In the next chapters, I will give a close look to the difficulties teachers and learners may encounter during the learning process. Also, I will present a variety of activities to help develop each of the skills. Finally, the reader will be shown some lesson plans in which all the skills are dealt with in detail. These will help her/him realize how important and productive it is to give the skills the importance they deserve.

Education can only be meaningful if it engages learners in reflecting on themselves, the world they live in, their relationship to it, and it provides them with the tools to improve it.

## II

### LANGUAGE SKILLS

#### A. LISTENING

“Speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehend by another person” (Rivers, 1966). Although Listening is often regarded as the least important skill, these simple words show a reality that cannot be avoided. Listening is used far more than any other single language skill in normal daily life.

Of course, we have to admit that it is one of the most difficult skills to be developed. In Reading, the reader can control how information reaches the eye. In Listening, the teacher cannot ask the students to “listen faster”. Besides, practice with recordings can be useful, but students report that it is difficult to maintain concentration for more than a brief period of time. They feel there is not enough time to process the current input before the next utterance is presented to the ear. The result of all this process is that students become overwhelmed by input, anxious and frustrated and cannot go on working as they are blocked out.

Listening is a demanding process, not only because of the complexity of the process itself, but also due to factors that characterize the listener, the speaker, the content of the message and any visual support that accompanies the message (Brown & Yule, 1983).

The listener’s comprehension increases when she/he is interested in the topic. Moreover, a listener who is an active participant in a conversation has more possibilities of understanding the topic, as he can make use of negotiation skills, such as asking for clarification, repetition, or definition of points not understood.

Some of the factors that might not enable the listener to follow the message could be the use of colloquial language and reduced forms on the part of the speaker or when he talks either too fast or too slow. This is why it is so important to expose learners to different kinds of listening comprehension material, as this will help them recognize these speech habits as clues to deciphering meaning.

It is always convenient to work first with a reading, complementing it with a listening based on the same topic or to activate the learners' schemata (background information) first and then start working with a listening. This way, the learners will be familiar with the content and it will be easier for them to comprehend it. Likewise, it is essential to complement listening material with visual support, such as video, pictures, diagrams, gestures, facial expressions, and body language.

To understand what students go through as they learn to listen or read, it is important to consider the "Bottom-up vs. Top-down processing" distinction.

Top-down processing refers to utilizing schemata (background knowledge and global understanding) to derive meaning from and interpret the message. This process includes expectations about language and expectations about the "world".

Bottom-up processing refers to deriving the meaning of the message based on the incoming language data, from sounds, to words, to grammatical relationships, to meaning. Stress, rhythm, and intonation also play an important role in this process.

Learners need to be aware that both of these processes affect their listening comprehension, and they need to be given opportunities to practice employing each of them.

There are some other factors that have to be taken into account when it comes to Listening. To get learners' attention, to keep them engaged and to maximize the effectiveness of listening/language learning experiences, it is essential to consider three principals: *relevance*, *applicability* and *task orientation*.

Both the listening lesson content and the outcome, i.e. the objective of the information use, need to be as relevant as possible for the learners. The more relevant topics, the more possibilities of having learners' ears tuned in. Relevance is easy to control but when using published materials, it will be necessary to choose only those lessons with topics that are relevant to the students.

Listening lessons need to have applicability value, that is to say that students have to feel they can use the information internally (to other classes) or externally (to out-of-school situations).

Finally, applying a task-oriented instruction in class is a good way of providing learners with tasks, which use the information in the aural texts. The purpose here is to give students practice in listening to get information and to do something with it immediately. Some of the listen-and-do tasks include:

- *Listening and performing actions and operations* (these are responses to directions, instructions, descriptions in a variety of contexts):
  - Drawing a picture
  - Manipulating objects (practicing prepositions)
  - Locating routes of specific points on a map
  - Selecting a picture of a person, place, or thing from description
  - Identifying a person, place, or thing from description

- Performing hand or body movements as in songs and games
  - Following instructions
  - Coloring
  - Carrying out steps in a process
- 
- *Listening and transferring information* (one kind of information transfer is from spoken to written – that is, hearing information and writing it, in order to achieve a certain outcome)
    - Listening and taking messages by transcribing them or by writing down notes on the important items in order to give the message to a third person.
    - Listening and filling in blanks in a gapped story game in order to complete the story.
    - Listening and completing a form or chart in order to use the information for some further purpose.
    - Listening and summarizing a short story, report or talk in order to report it to a third person.
    - Listening to a “how to” talk and writing an outline of the steps in order to carry out the action.
    - Listening to a talk or lecture and taking notes in order to use the information for some further purpose.
- 
- *Listening and solving problems* (many kinds of activities such as games and puzzles):

- Word games in which the answers must be derived from verbal clues.
  - Asking questions in order to identify something.
  - Formulating solutions to a paragraph length mystery story given by the teacher.
  - Solving mysteries.
- *Listening for enjoyment, pleasure, and sociability* (tasks with this outcome can include listening to songs, stories, plays, poems, jokes, anecdotes, or, as suggested by Ur (1984), “general interesting chat improvised by the teacher”).

After having mentioned some of the factors that are necessary to be taken into account to keep the students’ attention, let us now analyze the profile of the beginning-level, intermediate-level and advanced-level learners, and some of the exercise types for each level, according to Pat Wilcox Peterson.

***Beginning level:*** As these students have never been exposed to the target language, the bottom-up processing skills cannot be activated. They perceive the new language as undifferentiated noise. They are not yet able to identify words, sounds, word formation, or grammatical rules. However, they should be encouraged to tolerate uncertainty, to guess, to use their analytical skills, and to enjoy their success in comprehension. Teachers should consider the following suggestions: to expose the students to short global listening selections, to use a simplified language to express themselves, to add new material (vocabulary and structures) gradually and to use exercises which focus on structures or sounds in contrast. It is better if the theme and situation of the story or

dialogue is presented visually with drawings, pictures or posters. Setting the scene in this way will help students make use of their background knowledge and will encourage them to make predictions about the text.

The new text should be presented at normal speed, but with pauses between natural phrase groups. It is obvious that comprehension at the beginning stage is not total, but on the other hand, comprehension does not depend on understanding every word. Students will understand some of those words, and will neither remember all of them nor use them. However, every time they will hear those words again in a familiar context, they will recognize them.

### Exercise types

#### *Bottom-up processing:*

- Discriminating between rising or falling intonation
- Discriminating between phonemes
- Selecting morphological endings (e.g. *watched / watch / watching*)
- Selecting details from the text (word recognition) by matching words with pictures, circling words or pictures or by filling in charts with the correct information.
- Listening for normal sentence word order (e.g., filling in the missing words)

#### *Top-down processing:*

- Discriminating between emotional reactions
- Getting the main idea of a sentence (e.g., by listening to a sentence and selecting the picture it describes)
- Recognizing the topic

*Interactive processing:*

- Working with word associations.
- Following directions

*Intermediate level*

Although students at this stage have internalized the phonemic system of the language, they may still have problems understanding the phonological rules, which govern fast speech. However, they can listen to short conversations and not only get the main idea but also some supporting details. At this level, it is essential to work with authentic material, as students need to hear reduced forms, fast speech, hesitations and a variety of different voices to start understanding native speakers. Moreover, the more they discriminate grammatical features, the more they will incorporate them into their grammatical competence.

*Exercise types*

*Bottom-up processing:*

- Recognizing fast speech forms
- Finding the stressed syllable
- Recognizing words with reduced syllables
- Recognizing pertinent details in the speech stream and then answer questions or fill in charts.

*Top-down processing:*

- Listen to identify the speaker or the topic
- Finding main ideas and supporting details



- Making inferences (by answering inferential questions, or suggesting a possible context for a sentence)
- Discriminating between registers of speech and tones of voice

#### *Interactive processing*

- Recognizing missing grammar markers in colloquial speech
- Using knowledge of reduced forms to clarify the meaning of an utterance
- Listening to confirm expectations or to compare predictions to what is said.
- Use incomplete sensory data and cultural background information to construct a more complete understanding of a text (e.g., listening to one side of a telephone conversation and completing the other side)

#### *Advanced level*

Students at this level are no longer learning to listen or listening to learn the language. They listen in the language to learn about the content of other areas. Advanced learners can listen to longer texts, can deal with a certain degree of abstraction, can fill in gaps and make inferences when the text is incomplete. However, they may miss jokes, slang and cultural references.

#### *Exercise Types*

##### *Bottom-up processing:*

- Using features of sentence stress to identify information for note taking (e.g., extracting the content words, which are read with greater stress, and take notes)
- Identifying specific points of information

##### *Top-down processing:*

- Finding the main idea of a lecture segment

*Interactive processing:*

- Use knowledge of the text and the lecture content to fill in missing information
- Use knowledge of the text and the lecture content to discover the lecturer's misstatements and to supply the ideas that he meant to say.

CONCLUSION

Assisting learners in the development of listening comprehension is a challenge. It is a challenge that demands both the teacher's and the learner's attention because of the critical role that listening plays, not only in communication, but also in the acquisition of the language. Knowledge of the listening process and factors that affect listening enable teachers to select or create texts and activities that meet the students' needs. And finally, it is their main task to integrate this skill with the other five skills.

## II

### LANGAUGE SKILLS

#### READING

Most of what is known about Reading comes from first language reading research. However, English as a second language teachers need to have a general idea of the approaches behind reading instruction as they focus on how the various aspects of reading contribute to the reading process.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the main approach to reading was the application of the “bottom-up” strategy. Through this strategy, it is assumed that understanding the individual sounds will eventually lead to the understanding of the text. Readers derive meaning in a linear manner, first decoding letters, then words, phrases, and sentences to make sense of print.

Through the late 1960s and 1970s, the psycholinguistic or “top-down” approach to reading became dominant. This approach focuses meaning over structure. Although readers make use of sound-letter correspondence and syntactic knowledge, they draw on their experiential background knowledge (schema) to predict the meaning of the text and then read to confirm or correct their predictions (Goodman, 1967; Smith, 1971).

Before proceeding any further, let us define the notion of schema. Schemata have been described as the cognitive constructs, which allow us to relate incoming information to already known information. This covers the knowledge of the world (content schema), knowledge of language structures, and knowledge of texts and forms they take in terms of genre, and organization (formal schema).

While formal schemata cover discourse level items, linguistic or language schemata include the features needed to recognize words and how they fit together in a sentence. From all this, it is evident that schema plays an important role in text comprehension.

After mentioning some of the factors that should be taken into account when teaching Reading, let us analyze a content-based reading lesson.

A Reading lesson should be divided into three parts, the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages, each of which has its own particular aims and procedures.

#### *The pre-reading stage*

The main goals of this stage are to activate (or build, if necessary) the students' knowledge of the subject (to activate the students' schemata), to provide language preparation (vocabulary) related to the passage, and finally, to motivate the learners to want to read the text. Before studying each goal in particular, it is important to mention some of the factors that teachers should consider when selecting a text.

1. *Text organization:* As a genre, narratives and life stories are the most familiar and possibly the most engaging for readers. Moreover, narratives follow temporal order, which helps students identify tenses easily and, as it is a genre commonly encountered in any language, students' formal schema can be easily activated. All these are conditions that can help facilitate the reading process for the students and the language teacher.

2. *Motivation to read:* The best way to create motivation for reading is by selecting an interesting and readable text. Texts need to be relevant to the learners' age and

interests, so it is essential that teachers judge how closely the subject connects to the lives of the readers.

3. *Content*: If the content is familiar, learners can feel secure and make use of their background knowledge to facilitate the interpretation of the text. On the other hand, texts may offer new facts to learn and if they are striking and/or fun, they may help create interest and motivation.

4. *Readability*: In general, the shorter the sentence and words, the simpler it is to decode the message. Also, in working with beginners, the use of clauses joined by simple connectors such as “and” and “but” or connectors like “because” which indicate basic relations such as cause and effect, is preferable to using more complicated ones. In short, simple and clear structural features provide a scaffolding that can help readers gain access to texts.

To activate the students’ content schemata, various techniques can be used, including the use of pictures, movies, having students brainstorm about the topic and writing their ideas and related vocabulary on the blackboard.

Word-association tasks generally involve eliciting from the students as many ideas as they can offer regarding the announced subject of the text. A good way of organizing the vocabulary could be using “mind maps”.

Another way of activating the knowledge the students have about the subject could be through discussions. Discussions can be initiated by simple posing questions about the content of the text or by presenting a series of statements, often provocative in nature, to challenge students’ knowledge and beliefs about the content of the passage. Discussions or writing tasks can elicit students' personal views or previous

readings on a topic or their expectations with respect to text content or point of view. Writing is a particularly effective form of pre-reading activity that prompts readers to reflect on what they are about to read.

After pre-reading preparation, students should be much better prepared to read the selected text with greater understanding.

### The while-reading stage

During this stage, teachers are to help students understand the specific content of the text. Having students read the text aloud to the class is a good way of making them feel altogether engaged in the same topic, time and space, sharing doubts and difficulties that may have in common or not.

Teachers could also divide the class into groups and have each group read part of the text and then explain it to the other groups.

### The post-reading stage

This stage is intended to review the content, work on bottom-up concerns such as grammar and vocabulary, and to relate the new information with the students' knowledge and opinions.

Teachers can make general questions to work on the main ideas of the text. The advantage of making general or open questions is that to answer them, students have to make use of their grammar and vocabulary knowledge and their interpretation of the content. In general, when teachers make specific questions, students tend to read the answers rather than generate them.

The final segment of this stage should be devoted to integrating the new information with what students already know. There are different techniques to do this, like a writing assignment, a class discussion, a debate, a role-play, or a project work.

## **Reading material**

Helping students develop the Reading skill is one of the many goals language teachers pursue. The only way to reach this goal is by exposing their students to the different text-types they usually come across. The following list, taken from the book Developing Reading Skills by Françoise Grellet, will give teachers an idea of the many possibilities they have when choosing the reading material:

- ❖ Novels, short stories, tales; other literary texts and passages (e.g. essays, diaries, anecdotes, biographies)
- ❖ Plays
- ❖ Poems, limericks, nursery rhymes
- ❖ Letters, postcards, telegrams, notes
- ❖ Newspapers and magazines (headlines, articles, editorials, letters to the editor, stop press, classified ads, weather forecast, radio/TV/theater programs)
- ❖ Specialized articles, reports, reviews, essays, business letters, summaries, précis, accounts, pamphlets (political and other)
- ❖ Handbooks, textbooks, guidebooks
- ❖ Recipes
- ❖ Advertisements, travel brochures, catalogues
- ❖ Puzzles, problems, rules for games
- ❖ Instructions (e.g. warnings), directions (e.g. how to use...), notices, rules and regulations, posters, signs (e.g. road signs), forms (e.g. application forms, landing cards), graffiti, menus, price lists, tickets
- ❖ Comic strips, cartoons and caricatures, legends (of maps, pictures)
- ❖ Statistics, diagrams, flow/pie charts, time-tables, maps

- ❖ Telephone directories, dictionaries, phrasebooks

### **Ways of reading**

Following the same author, the main ways of reading can be summarize as follows:

- ◆ *Skimming*: quickly running one's eyes over a text to get the gist of it.
- ◆ *Scanning*: quickly going through a text to find a particular piece of information.
- ◆ *Extensive reading*: reading longer texts, usually for one's own pleasure. This is a fluency activity, mainly involving global understanding.
- ◆ *Intensive reading*: reading shorter texts, to extract specific information. This is more an accuracy activity involving reading for detail.

### **CONCLUSION**

In summary, it can be said that Reading requires knowledge of content, formal, and linguistic schema. It is also a meaning-making process involving an interaction between the reader and the text. There are many strategies involved in the Reading process, such as top-down and bottom-up strategies. This means that readers do not read word for word, but rather use their background knowledge, predict and confirm to comprehend texts.

After all this, it can be said that the process of Reading implies a combination of different facets and strategies and that it is finally accomplished when the child or adult is able to translate accurately and efficiently a string of printed letters into meaningful communication.



## II

### LANGUAGE SKILLS

#### **C. SPEAKING**

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning depend on the context in which it occurs, including the participants, their relationship, their own experiences, the physical environment and the purpose for speaking.

Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (*linguistic competence*), but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language (*sociolinguistic competence*). Moreover, speakers need to know that speech has its own skills, structures and conventions different from the written language.

#### **How to approach Pronunciation**

Speaking refers to the pronunciation of the language that is being learned. The goal of teaching pronunciation shouldn't be to make learners sound like native speakers, but to help them develop clear, understandable pronunciation with appropriate intonation and stress. Teachers should help students attain a kind of pronunciation that native speakers of the language will fully accept and comprehend.

To reach this goal, teachers should have some background knowledge of phonology in order to become conscious of the complex system of signals that natives use with such impressive unconscious skill. This does not mean that they will teach this knowledge

directly to the class, but it will help them know what to teach and how to teach pronunciation to their students. Mother-tongue transfer is generally more pervasive in the area of pronunciation than it is in grammar or lexicon.

It is important to note that having some knowledge of the phonology of the students' native language can also be very helpful. In this way, teachers will be able to anticipate problems and understand the source of errors that students could make.

The age of the student is one of the factors that should be taken into account when teaching pronunciation. The younger the age when the learner begins to acquire a language, the better the learner's pronunciation. In fact, complete mastery of a foreign language before age 12 generally results in accent-free speech.

The learner's exposure to the target language also affects the pronunciation considerably. The more time spent in learning the language and the better speaking models, the better pronunciation.

Finally, the student's attitude towards the target language and his/her aptitude for imitating and producing sounds and sound patterns, will definitely affect the pronunciation.

The extent of pronunciation instruction will vary according to the time available, the focus of the course and the students' level.

Pronunciation should be taught at every level of instruction. The applicability and degree of difficulty will vary according to the level of the students. For a beginning learner, it could be introduced with simple activities and making use of different techniques like the "listen and imitate/repeat" technique, tongue twisters, the use of minimal pairs or vowel shifts and stress shifts. At a more advanced level, it is useful to present a diagram with the organs of speech, the phonetic alphabet, the consonant chart and the vowel chart. This will help address the manner of articulation and voicing of

consonant sounds and differentiate the vowel sounds to bypass the sound/spelling difficulties.

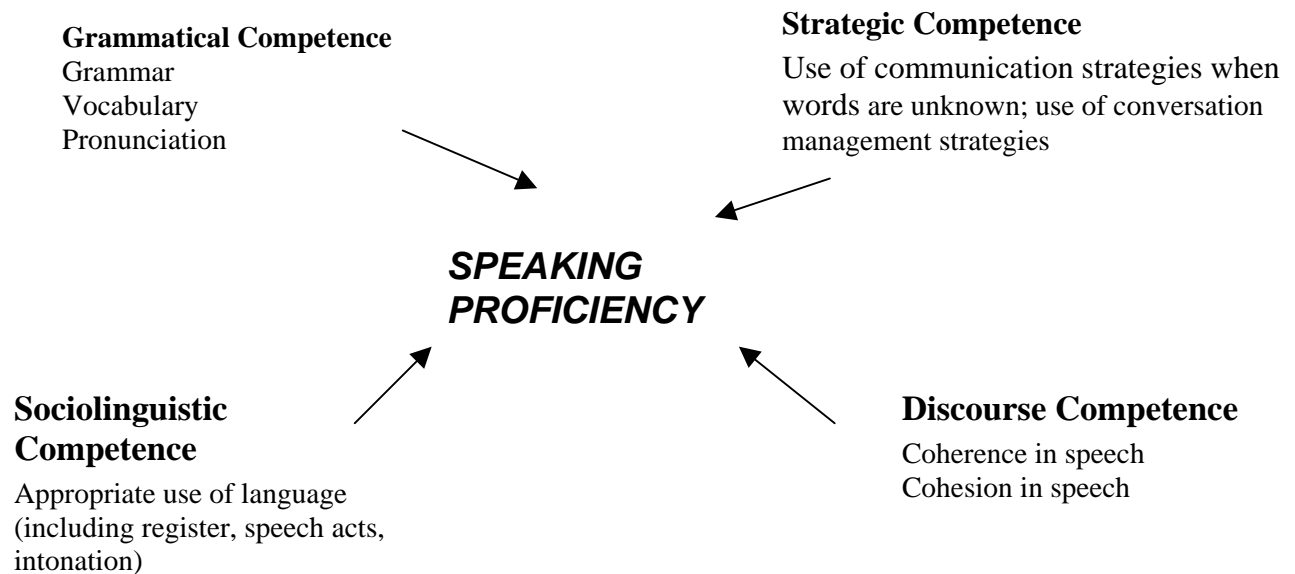
Pronunciation does not necessarily need to be taught out of context. On the contrary, students should be given exercises based on contextualized situations in which they have to distinguish the correct form aurally in order to provide the correct response or produce the correct form in order to elicit the correct response. These exercises may involve a sound contrast or even a stress or intonation contrast. Through these activities, students will realize how much pronunciation affects meaning. An example of how to differentiate sounds and intonation could be the following activities taken from *Spectrum 4 (Workbook)*, by N. Frankfort and J. Dye:

- ◆ *Listen to the questions and mark the intonation. Circle the arrow on the left when the speaker's voice goes up. Circle the arrow on the right when the speaker's voice goes down.*
- ◆ *People often confuse the expression **be used to** with the past expression **used to**. Listen to each sentence and check the expression you hear.*

Another type of activities could be the communicative ones. These are activities, which are performance-oriented – such as interviews, speeches, role-plays, drama scenes, and debates – and which can be audiotaped or videotaped. This gives the student the opportunity to focus on meaning during the communicative activity and to focus on form during the replay, promoting self-correction and peer-correction. Peer feedback is also important because students, listening for other students' errors, will be developing their own monitor and listening awareness.

## How to approach Speaking

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, pronunciation is one of the steps toward approaching one of the six skills: Speaking. However, having a good pronunciation does not mean being able to speak. The development of the Speaking skill implies many other factors that have to be taken into account. Following Canale and Swain (1980), we will analyze some of the abilities that speakers have to consider to reach speaking proficiency.



*Grammatical Competence* enables speakers to use and understand grammatical structures accurately, and thus, communicate and understand the language easily.

*Sociolinguistic Competence* refers to rules of speaking, which depend on social, pragmatic and cultural elements. Thus, the way a speaker apologizes or requests in any

language might depend on social status, age, sex or any other social factor. Moreover, in conversations the relationship between the speaker and the listener will have an important effect on how the listener understands the particular speech act. Most speech acts have more than one function and this is why there is a need to help students begin to become sensitive to why a speaker chose a particular speech act.

*Discourse Competence* relates to features of texts, whether it is spoken or written (e.g. the use of discourse markers). Thus, cohesion (the relationship, based on grammar or meaning, between two parts of a sentence or the parts of a larger piece of writing) and coherence (the organizational rules which make the sequence of the text meaningful) have to be taught to learners.

*Strategic Competence* allows them to overcome their deficiencies in any particular area. Speakers may not master all the grammar of the language but still can communicate making use of certain strategies like the use of small talk to open a conversation, or the use of gestures when they don't know all the words to say.

### **How to approach the Conversation skills**

When employing debates, topic discussions or role-plays, students become hesitant to express their viewpoints. Some of the reasons that might make students feel this way could be the fact of not having an opinion on the subject, or feeling worried about what the others may say or think, or sometimes feeling they cannot say exactly what they mean.

To eliminate some of these barriers, before asking students to express their opinion about a certain topic, teachers should make use of an activity called "Brainstorming". This

is an activity used to generate ideas within a specified time-period. The principle of brainstorming is that you need lots of ideas to get good ideas. This activity is often included as part of the pre-writing or warm-up phase when teaching writing, as it gives students the necessary time to activate their content schema and then, organize their ideas.

In conversation classes, brainstorming helps students organize their knowledge and activate the vocabulary and structures that they never use. One way of approaching it could be through word-mapping or phrase-mapping. In this activity, students write one word or phrase in the center of the page and link other related words or phrases to it. Other sources of inspiration for brainstorming could be pictures and songs.

## CONCLUSION

As we are dealing with Languages, teachers have to accept that performance is not absolute and therefore they cannot expect learners to acquire a perfect nativelike behavior. They should be after the development of an awareness of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences that might exist between the first language and the target language. Such awareness will often help explain why sometimes there is unintended pragmatic failure and breakdown in communication. And, if speakers are aware of it, it will be easier for them to reach their main goal in learning a language: to be able to communicate with others.

## II

### LANGAUGE SKILLS

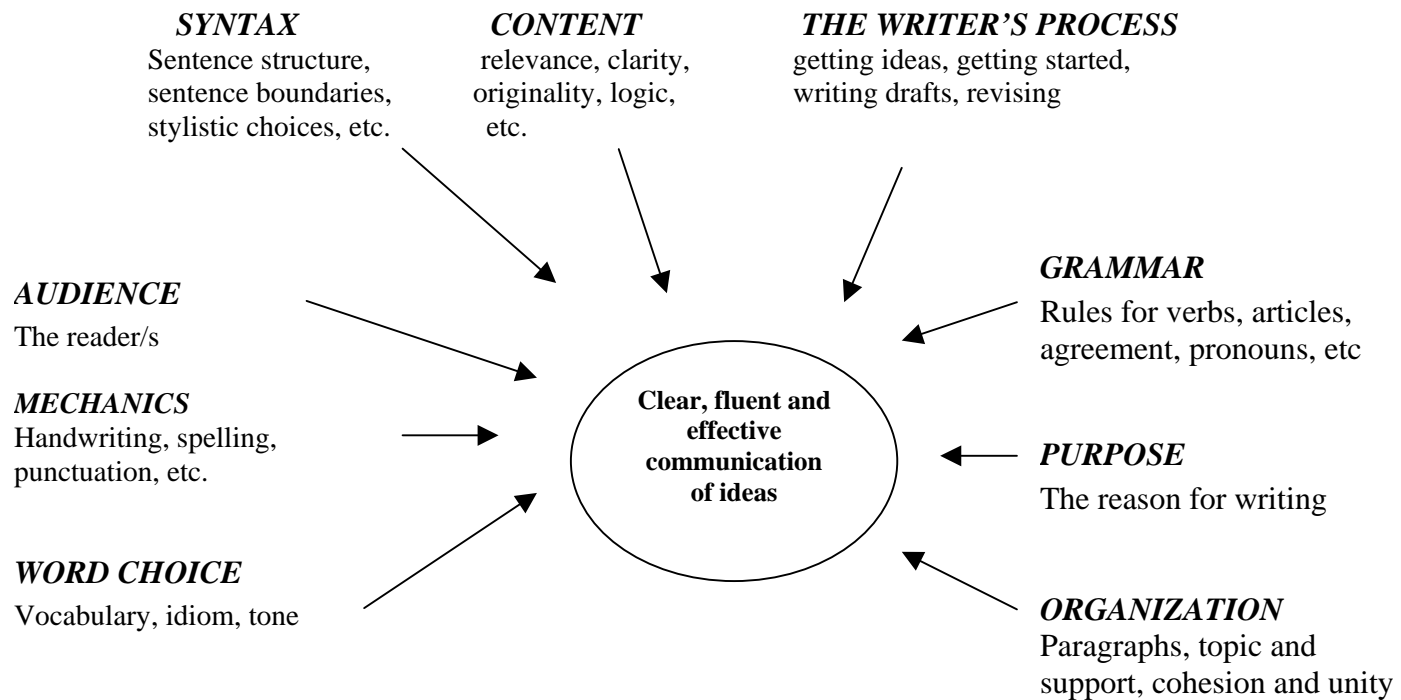
#### **D. WRITING**

“Writing enhances language acquisition as learners experiment with words, sentences and larger chunks of writing to communicate their ideas effectively and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they are learning in class”(Bello, 1997).

It is clear to see through these words how important Writing is in the whole process of communication, and this is true not only in the native language but also in the target language. It is through writing that students express their inner thoughts. This is one of the reasons why teachers have to help them develop this skill. However, like the other skills, it cannot be taught or practiced independently of the others.

Writing involves more than just producing sentences. To write a piece of acceptable prose, one must be able to write a series of sentences that are grammatically and logically connected. Moreover, one must be able to write for a particular purpose and audience. Widdowson (1972) points out that “to compose sentences is not the only ability we need to communicate. Communication takes place when we make use of sentences, to perform a variety of different acts of an essentially social nature.”

This is why, no matter which way teachers use to teach writing, there are certain features to be taken into account when producing a piece of writing. In her book *Techniques in Teaching Writing*, Ann Raikes summarizes them in the following diagram:



Taking into account all these features, a variety of approaches to the teaching of writing have been developed.

### **The Controlled-to-Free Approach**

This approach stresses three features of the diagram: grammar, syntax and mechanics. It emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency.

It is sequential, as students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to manipulate grammatically, by changing sentences in the present to the past, or plural to singular, or changing questions to statements. This technique helps students avoid errors.



Only after reaching certain proficiency are students allowed to write compositions and express their own ideas.

### **The Free-Writing Approach**

This approach emphasizes content and fluency rather than form. In general, teachers who follow this approach, begin their classes by asking their students to write freely on a topic without worrying about grammar and spelling.

### **The Paragraph-Pattern Approach**

This approach emphasizes organization rather than accuracy or fluency. With this approach, students are asked to analyze the forms of model passages and imitate them when writing. This approach is based on the principle that communication is organized and constructed depending on the culture the language belongs to.

### **The Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach**

Some teachers think that when writing, several features have to be taken into account. Students need to know, at least, grammar, syntax, vocabulary and organization to be able to convey the message they want to express.

### **The Communicative Approach**

Teachers who use this approach are convinced that 'real writing' involves a writer writing for a real reader. Therefore, not only do students read their classmates' piece of writing but also do something with it, such as respond, summarize, or make comments.

### **The Process Approach**

This approach emphasizes the process of writing rather than the written product itself. This involves the writing of a first draft; feedback from readers who will suggest new ideas, new sentences and new words; a revision of the first draft; and finally, a second draft and final product. Many teachers, before asking them to write about a certain topic, give them the opportunity to explore it fully with prewriting activities such as brainstorming, reading, and debates. **Brainstorming** consists of producing words, phrases or ideas without concern for appropriateness, order, or accuracy. Later connections among them are made which generate new ideas. Brainstorming can be done out loud in class or group, or individually on paper.

The use of **Reading** before writing helps fulfill different functions. Not only does it help students generate ideas about the topic, but it also provides models of what English texts look like and help them develop awareness of English prose style. Moreover, reading exercises can be done to draw students' attention to certain grammatical features, methods of development, and so on.

In general, all the approaches mentioned above overlap. Teachers tend to make use of most of them in their classes, depending on the time they have and the group they are working with.

### **Suggested activities**

Written activities include everything from paragraph writing to compositions and stories, from controlled to independent assignments.

*Controlled Writing.* It entails rewriting passages in arbitrary ways to practice specific grammatical structures. For example, students can be asked to rewrite a third person passage into first person from a character's point of view.

*Guided Writing.* In this case, students are asked to answer a series of questions or complete sentences which, when put together, retell or summarize the model, thereafter rewriting the sentences into one or more cohesive paragraphs. This kind of exercise helps students understand the given passage, especially at the literal level.

*Paraphrasing.* It demands that students use their own words to rephrase what they read or hear. It is a useful tool when working with poetry, because students use it to make sense of the poem.

*Summary.* It is used with short stories and plays, where students can follow a chronological sequence, a plot, a setting and characters.

*Adaptation.* It entails rewriting prose into dialog or a play into a narrative. This activity helps students become aware of the differences between spoken and written language.

*Changing the work.* Students can create their own endings and, after sharing it with their classmates, they can compare it with the author's.

*Drama-Inspiring Writing.* This activity may be derived from plays, short stories, novels and sometimes poetry. It consists in the students' stepping into the consciousness of a character and writing about his/her attitudes and feelings.

*Letter Writing.* It gives teachers the chance to deal with a variety of forms and functions that are essential in the language mastery. Letters are written to invite, explain, apologize, congratulate, complain, commiserate, inquire, order, apply, acknowledge, and thank. Each

of these language functions has its own associated vocabulary, sentence structure, tone and level of formality.

*Essay Writing.* Being given a specific topic, students are asked to write about it. Depending on the kind of essay they are asked to write, students need to make use of not only their imagination but also the ability to find ideas from books, newspapers, TV programs, etc, to support their own ideas.

*Dialogue Journals.* A dialogue journal is a written conversation in which a student and teacher communicate regularly (daily, weekly, etc.) Students write as much as they choose and the teacher writes back, giving comments, asking questions, rather than evaluating the student's writing. Through it, students have the opportunity to use the target language in a non-threatening atmosphere, in interaction with a proficient speaker. Because the interaction is written, it allows students to use reading and writing in purposeful ways and provides a natural, comfortable bridge to other kinds of writing.

## CONCLUSION

Writing is another important skill to be developed when learning a language as it allows students find their own voices in their new language. It also allows them to communicate effectively in different contexts and with different audiences. This is why it is important that teachers provide learners with opportunities to write about topics that are relevant to their lives and to help them feel that their writing has value as it the expression of their inner self.

## II

### **LANGUAGE SKILLS**

#### **E. GRAMMARING**

Grammar is another essential element that students need to be taught when learning a language, as it is its HEART. Teaching grammar means enabling language students to use linguistic forms accurately, meaningfully and appropriately. In her entry to the Routledge Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics, Savignon makes clear that "communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar, a set of shared assumptions about how language works....".

It is true that some learners acquire second language grammar naturally without instruction, but it is also true that, sometimes, the way they use it is far from accurate. This is why it is so important to consider grammar as one of the basic skills that have to be dealt with in Language teaching. Grammar teaching should not be considered as knowledge transmission, but as a skill development.

According to Larsen-Freeman, there three dimensions of language that must be dealt with when teaching grammar: the form or structures themselves, their semantics or meaning, and the pragmatic conditions governing their use.

In the first dimension, we find those forms that tell us how a particular grammar structure is constructed. In the second, we find the meaning of the grammar structure, which can be lexical or grammatical. And in the third, we find the relation between language and context encoded in the structure of a language.

### ***The learning Process***

Learning is a gradual process involving the understanding of form, meaning and pragmatics.

Even when they seem to have mastered a particular structure, they will always make mistakes with the introduction of new forms. Well-formedness is usually restored once the new additions have been incorporated and the system reanalysed (Larsen-Freeman, 1990)

In the learning process, grammar structures will be presented one at a time. However, students do not master one at a time before going on to learn another. There is a constant interaction between new interlanguage forms and old ones.

### ***The teaching process***

Grammar lessons are usually composed of three phases: presentation, practice and communication or production.

The linguistic rule can be presented inductively or deductively. Teachers can make use of specific reading material (poems, songs, passages, articles, dialogs, etc.) or listening material (video tapes, segments of taped conversations, speeches, radio/television broadcasts, etc.) to introduce the rule themselves or to ask students to formulate the pattern themselves. Sometimes, it is better to allow students to explore the language, as the knowledge they obtain becomes theirs and it is often much easier to remember. But no matter how the pattern is presented, after discovering it, teachers should state it explicitly and explain the use of it.

*What little we know about the psychological process of second language learning, either from theory or from practical experience, suggests that a combination of induction and deduction produces the best result... Learning is seen as fundamentally an inductive process but one which can be controlled and facilitated by descriptions and explanations given at the appropriate moment and formulated in a way which is appropriate to the maturity, knowledge, and sophistication of the learner. In a sense, teaching is a matter of providing the learner with the right data at the right time and teaching him how to learn, that is, developing in him appropriate learning strategies and means of testing his hypotheses. The old controversy about whether one should provide the rule first and then the examples, or vice versa, is now seen to be merely a matter of tactics to which no categorical answer can be given. (Corder, 1973)*

The last stage is the production stage, when students start practicing the production of meaningful utterances applying their acquired knowledge.

One important thing to mention is that many people think that grammar can only be taught through repetition. Teaching grammar does not mean repeating and memorizing rules. There are a lot of activities that can be fun and which require students to think and not just provide mechanical responses.

### ***Some suggested activities***

There are activities based on repetition drills to help students internalize the grammatical patterns. However, as they are task-oriented activities, students do not realize they are repeating structures, as they do when working with conventional drill exercises. Moreover, these activities help the teacher create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. Therefore, the language form becomes an essential component in the

activity. By making the language convey information and opinion, these activities provide the key feature of 'drill' with the opportunity to sense the working of language as living communication.

Memory round (frequency adverbs)

- ◆ Materials: cards with a frequency adverb written on each
- ◆ Procedure: Prepare one card for each student.

The students form a circle, either sitting or standing.

Each student makes a sentence using his/her frequency adverb, but no writing is allowed at any time:

**Example:** *Never:* I never eat fast food

*Always:* I always brush my teeth

*Seldom:* I seldom study for tests

Holding the card with the frequency adverb toward the circle, the first student says his/her first sentence. The second student says his/her sentence and repeats the first student's sentence. The third student says his/her sentence and repeats the first two sentences, and so on around the circle until the last student, who says his/her sentence and repeats the sentences from everyone in the group.

**Example:**

**Student 1:** I never eat fast food

**Student 2:** I always brush my teeth, and Jane never eats fast food

**Student 3:** I seldom study for tests, Akiko always brushes her teeth and Jane never eats fast food.



**Student 4:** I usually go to bed at 10:00, Maria seldom studies for tests, Akiko always brushes her teeth and Jane never eats fast food.

Note: This activity can be used to practise tenses, vocabulary, et.

Daily planner

◆ Materials:

| <i>Monday</i>   | <i>Tuesday</i>  | <i>Wednesday</i> | <i>Thursday</i> | <i>Friday</i>   | <i>Saturday</i> | <i>Sunday</i>   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <u>Activity</u> | <u>Activity</u> | <u>Activity</u>  | <u>Activity</u> | <u>Activity</u> | <u>Activity</u> | <u>Activity</u> |
|                 |                 |                  |                 |                 |                 |                 |

- ◆ Procedure: Give each student a copy of the worksheet and tell them to think of one thing that they are planning to do each day for the next week or half-week. They should write a short note on their planner indicating each activity.

**Example:** SUNDAY: visit my friends

Each student tries to find another student to accompany him/her on each activity by asking, first, what they are doing at a specific time in the future and, second, if they are interested in doing the particular activity.

**Example:**

**Student A:** Are you free on Sunday at 2:00 PM?

**Student B:** Yes, I'm free. / No I have some plans.

**Student A:** I'm visiting my friends. Would you like to come?

**Student B:** Yes, I'd like to.

A student may refuse to accompany another because he/she is busy, is uninterested in the activity, or has another valid excuse.

Students must write down the name of the student who agrees to accompany them on each activity.

When they have a different name for each day, they are finished. It may not be possible for them to find students to accompany them on every activity.

Follow up by asking students at random what they are doing at a specific time/date and with whom.

### Possessives

◆ Materials:

1. I have your books.
2. Is she your baby?
3. Do you have my dictionary?
4. That new car is their car.
5. This is your jacket; it isn't my jacket.
6. This is my test paper.
7. Did you bring his ID?
8. Those aren't your tickets. We have our tickets.
9. Did you see her project?
10. My purse is leather; her purse is straw.
11. Your car is nice, but our car is nicer.
12. The winning science project is my project.
13. I like your sweater better than my sweater.
14. His experience was worse than his experience.
15. May I borrow your pencil? I broke my pencil.
16. Those brownies are their brownies.
17. The books on the table are their books.
18. I sold my computer.

19. That cocker spaniel is our dog.

20. Their shoes are outside.

- ◆ Procedure: Devide the class into two teams and have them stand in lines.

Using the worksheet, read a sentence to the student in Team 1. The student must change the possessive adjective and noun to a possessive pronoun.

**Example:** This is my pen. —————> This is mine.

If the student answers correctly, he/she scores a point for the team. In either case, the student goes to the end of the line.

The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

### Prepositional Chain Drill

- ◆ Procedure: Review the prepositions of place.

Take a small object, such as a pen, and do something with it, then describe your action. (Put the pen on the desk and say, “I put the pen on the desk.”)

Give the pen to a student and ask him/her, “What did I do with the pen?”

The student answers and then does something different with the object that involves a different preposition of place.

The student then passes the object to the next student and asks “What did we do with the pen?” That student repeats what the teacher did and what the first student did with the object. The second student then does something different with the object before passing it to the third student.

**Example:**

**Teacher:** I put the pen on the desk. What did I do with the pen?

**Alfredo:** You put the pen on the desk. *(to the next student, Damian)* I put the pen above my head. What did we do with the pen?

**Damian:** The teacher put the pen on the desk. Alfredo put the pen above his head. I put the pen under my book. *(to the next student)* What did we do with the pen?

Match

◆ Materials:

|          |              |              |              |        |
|----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------|
| airplane | cat          | dog          | ladder       | rock   |
| ant      | chalk        | fog          | lake         | snow   |
| bee      | charge cards | giraffe      | Mexican food | stilts |
| bus      | checks       | Italian food | mud puddle   | wolf   |
| 1.       | _____        |              |              |        |
| 2.       | _____        |              |              |        |
| 3.       | _____        |              |              |        |
| 4.       | _____        |              |              |        |
| 5.       | _____        |              |              |        |
| 6.       | _____        |              |              |        |
| 7.       | _____        |              |              |        |
| 8.       | _____        |              |              |        |
| 9.       | _____        |              |              |        |
| 10.      | _____        |              |              |        |

◆ Procedure: 1. Put students into pairs, and give each pair a copy of the worksheet.

Go over the words on the list and explain any with which students are unfamiliar.

2. Call out an adjective or phrase from the list below. The students choose two of the words or expressions on the worksheet and write a

comparison sentence. Continue until all the words on the paper have been matched.

Adjectives to use with the worksheet:

|             |           |       |       |
|-------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| clean       | expensive | noisy | slow  |
| cold        | good pet  | quick | spicy |
| dangerous   | hard      | short | tall  |
| easy to use | large     |       |       |

**Example:** Instructor says: “spicy”

Students write: “Mexican food is spicier than Italian food”

3. Go over the sentences by having the pairs write them on the board or read them aloud. The other students decide if the sentences are logical and grammatical.

Just the facts

◆ Materials:

\$

|                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| drive with your eyes closed | eat five pizzas at once  |
| use sunscreen               | heat water to 100°C      |
| fly east from here          | put ice cubes in the sun |

|                  |                           |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| have a baby      | never study               |
| read a lot       | do not eat                |
| overwater plants | pour oil on water         |
| pass this class  | take scuba diving lessons |

- ◆ Procedure: 1. Cut up the cards in the worksheet or prepare your own. Distribute one to each student, who must construct a sentence that uses the true conditional form.

**Example:** Add lemon to milk

**Example fact (by student):** If you add lemon to milk, it curdles.

2. Arrange students in a circle, and have each say his/her sentence.

- ◆ Variation: To avoid students' losing interest, do step 2 as a memory round. Each student says his/her sentence and repeats all those that came before his/hers.

## CONCLUSION

Learning grammar is as important as developing the rest of the skills. In a way, the four traditional skills (reading, speaking, listening, writing) serve as means of putting grammar into practice. Without it, it would be impossible to communicate appropriately and to understand and be understood accurately. Being Grammar the heart of the language, it deserves to be analysed not as a simple rule but as a three-dimensional framework.

## II

### LANGUAGE SKILLS

#### F. VOCABULARY

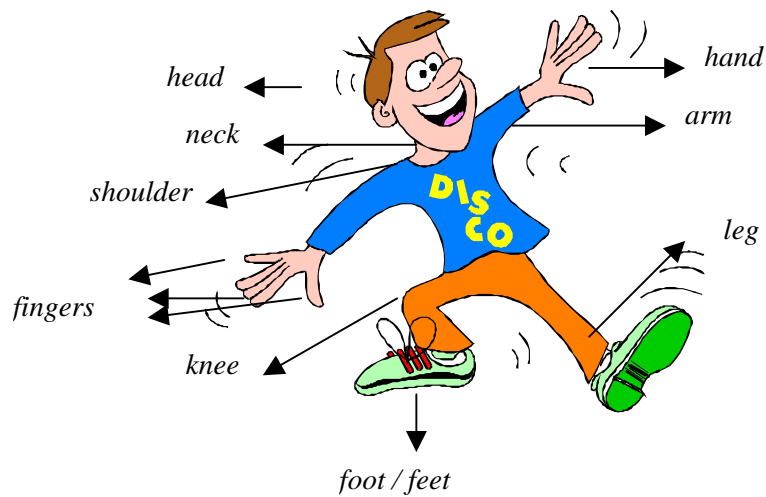
At the beginning of every course, it would be good if the teacher asked the students to divide their notebooks into at least three parts. One part would contain “Grammar information”. The other would contain “Vocabulary”. And the last one would contain all the written exercises mentioned in the WRITING chapter.

This would be a good way to help students organize the knowledge they will be receiving through the years. In this way, whenever they feel the need to check a certain pattern, they can find it easily just checking the “Grammar” part. Likewise, when they do not remember the vocabulary based on a certain topic, they can find it in the “Vocabulary” part, which, by then, will have become a personal dictionary for them.

There are different ways of introducing the Vocabulary to the students. Research suggests that our “mental lexicon” is highly organized and efficient, and that semantic related items are stored together. Therefore, grouping items of vocabulary in semantic fields (lexical set), such as topics (e.g. parts of the body), is one of the best ways of introducing it. Two other ways of relating vocabulary would be through *synonymy* (a word similar in meaning) and *antonymy* (a word opposite in meaning).

- **Use of Pictures**

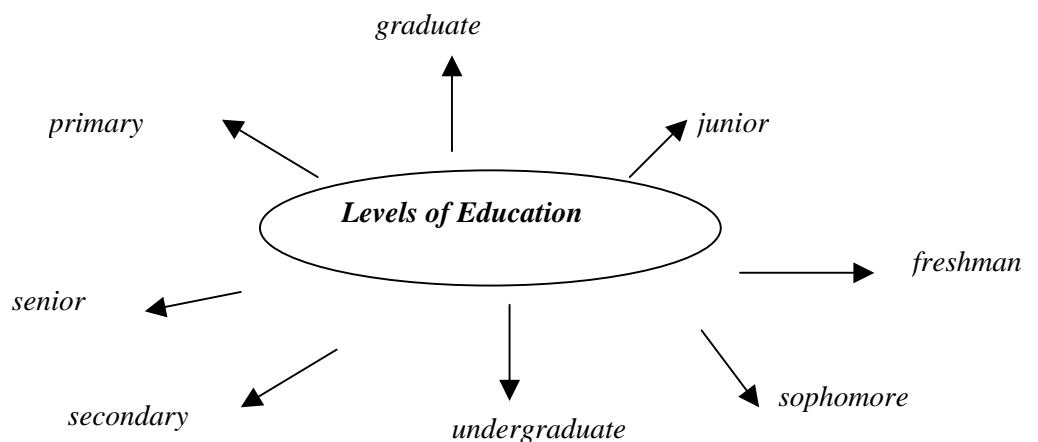
The use of pictures is essential because they help students relate words with images. This is very helpful especially for those students who have visual memory.



### **PARTS OF THE BODY**

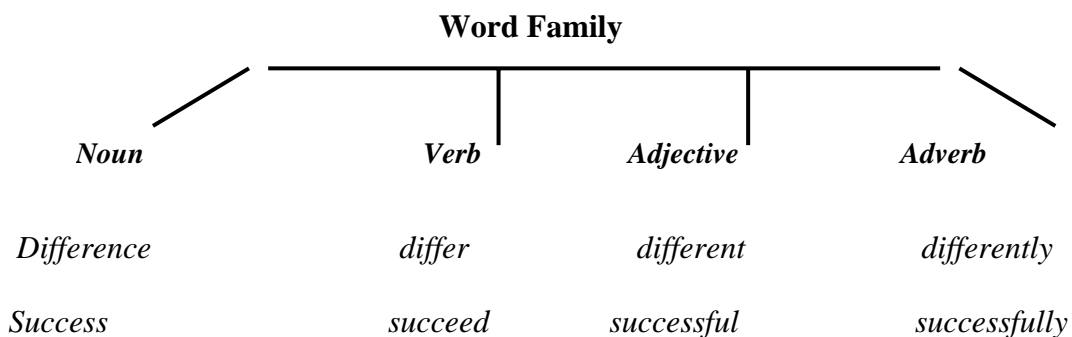
- **Use of Thinking Maps**

They are useful especially when it is hard to use pictures to represent the words. This is another way to organize and categorize vocabulary based on a certain topic. The use of some form of visual display or diagram (pictorial schemata) may help students interpret the relation among words and their meaning.

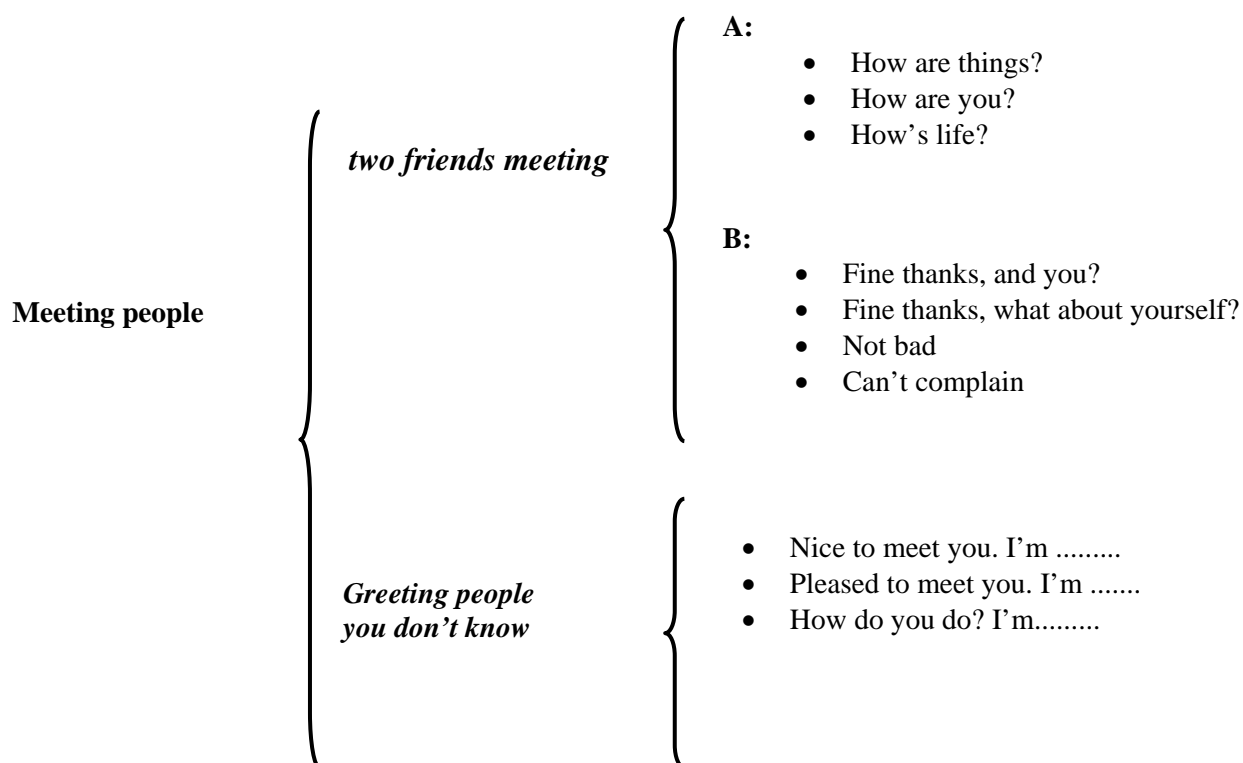


(Example of Bubble Map)





(Example of Tree Map, used for organizing and categorizing)



(Example of a Bracket Map, used for generating vocabulary and breaking down information)

- **Guessing the meaning through context**

Another way to present a new item is by embedding the word in a sentence in such a way that it may be possible for the students to guess the meaning of the item.

Of course, it is essential that the context be clear and not confusing.

## **CONCLUSION**

It has to be understood that time has to be set aside for vocabulary study as this skill is as important as the others. Students need to be given the lexical items within their semantic fields through pictorial schemata or any other way, to deepen an awareness of how lexical items operate and to be able to fix them in their new lexicon.

### III

#### INTEGRATED APPROACHES

After having analyzed the importance of developing the different skills, some of the drawbacks that teachers and students have to face during the learning process, and some ways of approaching the teaching of the target language, I would like to show the readers some samples of lesson plans, including my personal experience when putting them into practice. Through the whole chapter, the readers will be able to identify activities and the use of material mentioned in the previous chapters.

It is important to mention that I got most of my experience working at Language Schools, where groups of students are small, which enables a more personalized relation with them and therefore, a better realization of their improvement and difficulties.

#### SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

##### *LESSON PLAN 1*

**Theme:** Dining Etiquette

**Group:** Level: Upper Intermediate

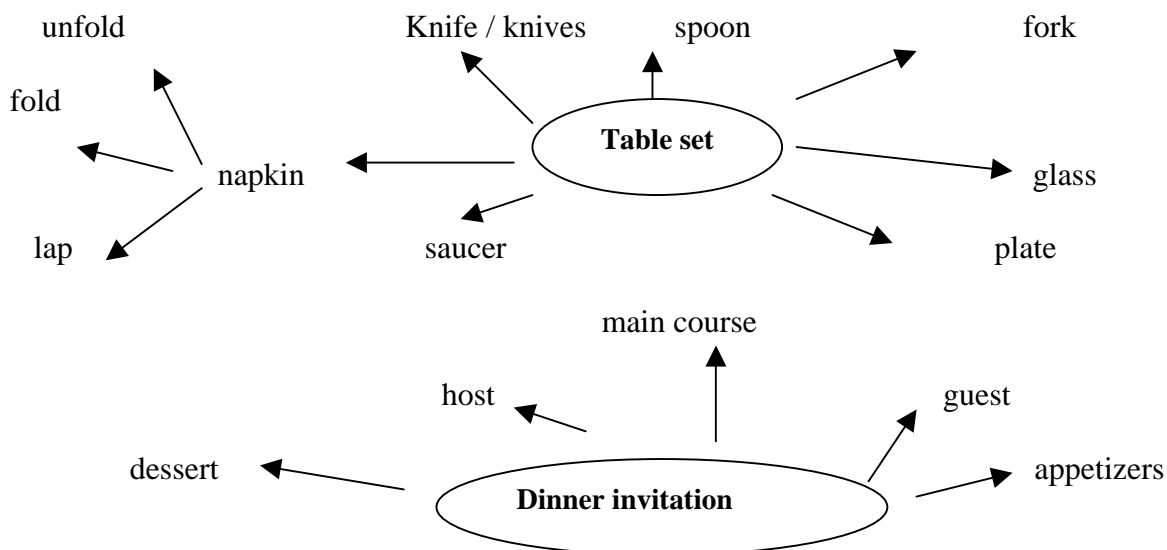
Age: Pre-adolescents / Adolescents

**Objectives:** Students will improve their **table manners**, will learn a new grammatical structure (**It + verb + adjective/NP + infinitive = infinitive + verb + adjective/NP**) and will practice **modal verbs** and **perfect modal verbs**.

**Materials:** silverware, napkins, glasses, plates

**Steps to follow:**

1. Teacher puts the table utensils on the desk. Working in groups, she asks the students to set the table using all of them. For a better understanding of the text, it would be convenient to have, at least, three glasses, three forks, three knives and two spoons and a plate for every group. This way, students will get confused and, at the same time, motivated to read the text to clear up their confusion.
2. Teacher elicits vocabulary from students about table utensils in the target language, if possible. If not, students will say the words in their mother tongue. Making use of mind maps, she writes the vocabulary on the blackboard and also adds vocabulary related to the topic and used in the reading, like 'host', 'lap', 'guest', etc.



3. Once students were given the vocabulary included in the reading and about the topic, the teacher asks them about the importance of table manners.

As my students were adolescents, they found the topic very interesting, especially because they were starting to go out with friends and go on dates. They knew that table manners would help them make a good impression and therefore, it was not difficult to get their attention and interest.

4. After setting the table, they compare the way they placed all the elements on the table and they explain why they put them the way they did.
5. Students sit at the table and they pretend to eat using the whole set of utensils. Again, they compare the different ways they do it.
6. Students are given a passage based on Dining Etiquette written by the Ball State University. While reading it aloud in turn, they follow the instructions acting them out.

Passage:

## **DINING ETIQUETTE**

*Table manners play an important part in making a favorable impression. They are visible signals of the state of our manners and therefore are essential to professional success.*

### **Napkin Use**

*The meal begins when the host unfolds his or her napkin. This is the guest's signal to do the same. Place your napkin on your lap, completely unfolded if it is a small luncheon napkin or in half, lengthwise, if it is a large dinner napkin. Typically, you want to put your napkin on your lap soon after sitting down at the table (but follow your host's lead). The napkin remains*

on your lap throughout the entire meal and should be used to gently blot your mouth. If you need to leave the table during the meal, place your napkin on your chair. The host will signal the end of the meal by placing his or her napkin on the table. Once the meal is over, you too should place your napkin neatly on the table to the right of your dinner plate. (Do not refold your napkin, but don't wad it up, either.)

## Ordering

If, after looking over the menu, there are items you are uncertain about, ask the server any questions you may have. Answering your questions is part of the server's job. It is better to find out before you order that a dish is prepared with something you do not like or are allergic to than to spend the entire meal picking tentatively at your food.

As a guest, you should not order one of the most expensive items on the menu or more than two courses unless your host indicates that it is all right.

## Use of Silverware

Choosing the correct silverware from the variety in front of you is not as difficult as it may first appear. Starting with the knife, fork or spoon that is farthest from your plate, work your way in, using one utensil for each course. The salad fork is on your outermost left, followed by your dinner fork. Your soup spoon is on your outermost right, followed by your salad knife and dinner knife. Your dessert spoon and fork are above your plate or brought out with dessert. If you remember the rule to work from the outside in, you'll be fine.

There are two ways to use a knife and fork to cut and eat your food. They are the American style and the European or Continental style. Either style is considered appropriate. In the American style, one cuts the food by holding the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left hand with the fork tines holding the food to the plate. Cut a few bite-size pieces of food, then lay your knife across the top edge of your plate with the sharp edge of the blade facing in. Change your fork from your left to your right hand to eat, fork tines facing up. The European or Continental style is the same as the American style in that you cut your meat by holding your knife in your right hand while securing your food with your fork in your left hand. Your fork remains in your left hand, tines facing down, and the knife in your right hand. Simply eat the cut pieces of food by picking them up with your fork still in your left hand.

## When you are finished

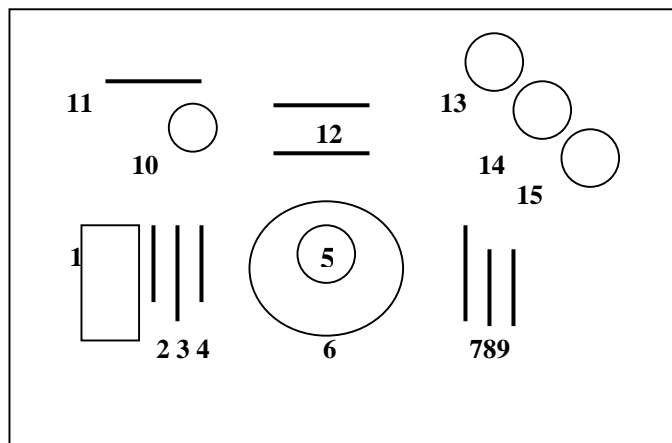
Do not push your plate away from you when you are finished eating. Leave your plate where it is in the place setting. The common way to show that you are finished with your meal is to lay your fork and knife diagonally across your plate. Place your knife and fork side by side, with the sharp side of the knife blade facing inward and the fork, tines down, to the left of the knife. The knife and fork should be placed as if they are pointing to the numbers 10 and 4 on a clock face. Make sure they are placed in such a way that they do not slide off the plate as it is being removed. Once you have used a piece of silverware, never place it back on the table. Do not leave a used spoon in a cup, either; place it on the saucer. You can leave a soup spoon in a soup plate. Any unused silverware is simply left on the table.

## Some Basic Table Manners

- It is inappropriate to ask for a doggy bag when you are a guest.
- It is best to order foods that can be eaten with a knife and fork.
- Do not order alcoholic beverages. Drinking too much when dining out is dislikable
- It makes a good impression to sit up straight.

- *When you are not eating, keep your hands on your lap or resting on the table (with wrists on the edge of the table). It is acceptable to place your elbows on the table only between courses, not while you are eating.*
- *Never chew with your mouth open or make loud noises when you eat. Although it is possible to talk with a small piece of food in your mouth, do not talk with your mouth full.*
- *Do not slurp soup from a spoon. Spoon the soup away from you when you take it out of the bowl and sip it from the side of the spoon. If your soup is too hot to eat, let it sit until it cools; do not blow on it.*

## Formal Dinner Place Setting



1. Napkin
2. Fish fork
3. Dinner or main course fork
4. Salad fork
5. Soup bowl & plate
6. Dinner plate
7. Dinner knife
8. Fish knife
9. Soup spoon
10. Bread & butter plate
11. Butter knife
12. Dessert spoon and cake fork
13. Sterling water goblet
14. Red wine goblet
15. White wine goblet

6. After reading the passage, explaining the new vocabulary and following the instructions, the teacher makes questions about the content to monitor the students' understanding.
7. Teacher asks the students to focus their attention on the underlined sentences. Then she asks them to compare the sentences and find out what they have in common.
8. Working in pairs, students try to formulate the grammatical rule. After formulating the two rules, the teacher shows them how to relate them.

Example:        *It makes a good impression to sit up straight*  
                      *Sitting up straight makes a good impression*

9. Students work with the underlined sentences using the new rules.
10. Teacher asks them to make new sentences using the new rules.
11. Students read aloud their sentences and if there are mistakes, they correct among themselves.
12. Teacher plays a video about the importance of “Teaching Good Manners in Primary and Secondary School” (recorded from SHE TV – Discovery Channel).



**13.** Teacher asks students to write down the things the video and the passage have in common.

**14.** Students share the information in groups and make a summary. Later, they present it to the class.

**15.** Follow Up activity:

One of the students goes to the front of the class and pretends to eat making some mistakes. Every time they identify a mistake, they have to make sentences using modal verbs:

Example: **She placed the knife on the table after eating and she *should have placed it on the edge of the plate.***

**He *could have put his elbows on the table, as he wasn't eating.***

**16.** Before finishing the class, students have to show the teacher how they have improved their table manners and how they will eat from then onward.

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ON THE SAMPLE CLASS

As mentioned in the previous chapters, it is important to choose topics that may interest students. This will help get their attention easily and generate a positive attitude in the class, especially when working with adolescents.

Readers have observed that a certain order was followed for the activities. First, the conversation activity at the beginning of the class was used as a schema activator and as a

scaffold for the reading passage. Second, the whole previous information was used as a scaffold for the listening material, which is, in general, the most difficult part to be understood and the one that causes more frustration and anxiety. In between, the grammar topic was taught. The teaching of grammatical patterns should never be left for the last part of the class because it requires students' concentration and at the end of the class, after hard work, that is almost impossible. This is why, the writing activity, which is the least demanding one, is done at the end of the class or at the very beginning as a "breaking the ice" activity.

## ***LESSON PLAN 2***

**Theme:** Thanksgiving

**Group:** Level: Intermediate

Age: Pre-adolescents / Adolescents

**Objectives:** Students will learn about Thanksgiving, will be able to compare their national holidays with the **American Thanksgiving Day**.

Grammar topic: Students will learn how to turn sentences in direct speech into **reported speech**.

**Steps to follow:**

1. Teacher sticks a picture about Thanksgiving Day on the blackboard (It should be a scene in which the Pilgrims and the Indians are eating together). Then she asks

students to describe the picture and asks them why they think are eating together if they belonged to completely different civilizations.

2. Teacher asks students about Thanksgiving. If students don't know anything about it, she starts by asking them to deduce through the name of the holiday what people do when they get together and why.
  
3. Teacher asks students about their national holidays. Students talk about the history, customs, food prepared and dates of their national holidays, like Independence Day.
  
4. Teacher plays a video about Thanksgiving (part of the third act of Episode 6 from *Family Album, U.S.A*, Macmillan, Inc., U.S.A.) without volume. This way, students have to describe the whole scene and imagine what the people on the video are saying.
  
5. Teacher plays the scene again but this time with the volume on. Students compare their versions with the real one.
  
6. Teacher gives the students the script of the act but with some gaps on it. Students are asked to listen to the video again and to fill the gaps.

Script:

Philip: *Ok, everybody. I want to welcome Harry and his daughter Michelle to Thanksgiving with us.*

Harry: *Thank you, Dr. Steward.*

Philip: *Call me Philip.*

Harry: *OK.*

Philip: *But first, I think we should take a moment and remember the meaning of Thanksgiving.*

Harry: *Philip, I took Michelle to a school play about the first Thanksgiving.*

Philip: *Well, why don't you tell us about that, Michelle?*

Michelle: *Thanksgiving was about the Pilgrims, the first settlers in America. They shared the first harvest with the Indians and gave thanks.*

Philip: *All right. Then in that spirit let's each of us give thanks. Each in his own way. Who wants to begin?*

Grandpa: *I will. I give thanks for being here with my family and for being well, so I can enjoy you all.*

Robbie: *All right! We love you, Grandpa.*

Susan: *I'd like to give thanks for a healthy year, a good job, and for meeting Harry and Michelle.*

Harry: *We'd like to give thanks for meeting Susan and the Steward family.*

Michelle: *I love you, Daddy.*

Susan: *Thanks, Harry. That was very kind of you.*

Robbie: *I'd like to give thanks for Grandpa coming to live with us. And I'd also like to thank my math teacher for giving me a passing grade.*

Ellen: *Oh, Robbie!*

Grandpa: *She'll call.*

Richard: *You go first, Marilyn.*

Marilyn: *I'm thinking. You go first.*

Richard: *Well, you all know I'm working on my photo album. It's not finished yet. And I'd like to thank Marilyn for being so patient.*

Marilyn: *Thanks, Richard. I should thank you for encouraging me to keep working on my fashion designs. I'm lucky to have a husband with an artistic eye.*

Ellen: *Oh, we have a lot to be thankful for. For the food on this table. Just like the Pilgrims.*

Philip: *I'll go along with that, Ellen.*

Ellen: *Well, help me serve, Robbie.*

**Later, after dinner.**

Harry: *It was a wonderful meal, Mrs. Steward. Thank you.*

Richard: *And now to see the end of the football game.*

Philip: *Exactly.*

Ellen: *Where are you going, Philip?*

*Philip: Remember, the Michigan football game? And Michigan needs a touchdown.*

*Ellen: Did you forget something?*

*Robbie: Dad, your famous apple pie.*

*Philip: Just let me see the score, Ellen.*

*Marilyn: Go ahead, Philip. We should all take a little break before desert.*

7 After completing the passage with all the missing words, the teacher explains the vocabulary and the expressions that the students might find difficult to understand.

Example: settlers, harvest, in that spirit, touchdown.

8. Teacher asks the students to write down all the things that the people on the video did for Thanksgiving like taking hands before giving thanks, giving thanks, cooking an apple pie, watching the football game, etc. (group work)

9. The groups read their notes and share them with their classmates.

10. In pairs, students write down the things they would like to give thanks for.

They share their sentences with the class and they explain why giving thanks for those things was important for them.

11. Teacher asks the students what Philip says at the beginning. (Grammar: Reported Speech)

Students: *I want to welcome Harry and his daughter Michelle to Thanksgiving with us.*

12. Teacher writes:

***Philip said he wanted to welcome Harry and his daughter Michelle to Thanksgiving with them.***

13. Teacher asks the students to compare the sentence they read with the one she wrote on the blackboard. Later, teacher writes:

|                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b><i>Direct Speech</i></b> | <b><i>Indirect Speech</i></b> |
| Simple Present              | Simple Past                   |

14. Teacher goes on asking students to read some other sentences and she writes the same sentence on the blackboard using reported speech. Then she asks them to spot the differences and they complete the chart together.

15. Teacher asks the students to retell the whole act of the video but this time using reported speech.

16. Teacher gives them a reading based on Thanksgiving taken from “*All about the USA*”, by Milada Broukal.

Passage:

## THANKSGIVING

*On the fourth Thursday in November, in houses around the United States, families get together for a feast, or a large meal. Almost all families eat turkey and cranberry sauce for this meal, and have pumpkin pie for dessert. This feast is part of a very special day, the holiday of Thanksgiving.*

*In 1620 the Pilgrims made a difficult trip across the ocean from England. They landed in what is now Massachusetts. In England the Pilgrims had not been allowed to freely practice their religion. So they went to the New World in search of religious freedom.*

*The Pilgrims’ first winter was very hard. Almost half the group died of cold, hunger, and disease. But the Indians of Massachusetts taught the Pilgrims to plant corn, to hunt, and to fish. When the next fall came, the Pilgrims had plenty of food. They were thankful and had a feast to give thanks. They invited the Indians to join them. This was the first Thanksgiving.*

*Thanksgiving became a national holiday many years later because of a woman named Sarah Hale. For forty years Sarah Hale wrote to each president and asked for a holiday of Thanksgiving. At last she was successful. In 1863 President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a holiday.*

*How much is Thanksgiving today like the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving? In many ways they are different. For example, historians think that the Pilgrims ate deer, not turkey. The idea of Thanksgiving, though, is very much the same: Thanksgiving is a day on which we celebrate and give thanks.*

Though the passage is simple, the teacher asks the students to read it aloud in turn. After reading, she makes questions about the content to monitor the students' understanding.

17. Follow up activity: In pairs, students compare the content of the reading with the episode of the video and after finding the similarities, they share them with their classmates

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ON THE SAMPLE LESSON

Thanksgiving was a good topic to deal with in the class because most of my students had heard about it on movies but they did not know what it was about. Moreover, it was good to compare what people do in American holidays with what they do in theirs.

Notice that this time the video was played before the reading activity. The reason why I decided to follow this order was because the vocabulary was not difficult and because the visual aid (scenes of the video) summarized the content of the topic. Again, the grammar structures were taught in the middle of the class, leaving the reading activity, which was short and free of difficulties, to the end.

## LESSON PLAN 3

**Theme:** Giving directions

**Group:** Level: Beginners / Lower Intermediate

Age: Pre-adolescents / Adolescents / Adults

**Objectives:** Students will learn how to give directions and how to ask for directions. They will also learn the Imperative and practice the prepositions of place.

**Materials:** A map of the city where the students live.

### **Steps to follow:**

1. Teacher starts the class by asking how far students live from there. Then she sticks a map of the city on the blackboard and asks the students to indicate the place where they live on it.
2. While they are indicating the way to their places, the teacher writes on the blackboard the directions in English.
3. ***Vocabulary and expressions:***

- *Asking for directions:*

*“How do I get to ....?”*

*“Can you tell me the best way of getting to ...?”*

- *Giving directions:*

*“Walk to the corner and* | *turn left”*

| *turn right*

| *make a left turn*

| *make a right turn*

*“Walk two blocks to the traffic lights”*

*“Walk straight ahead to the second set of lights”*

*“Walk along San Martin Street for three blocks and then turn right”*

*“The hospital will be on your right”*

*“You will see the hospital on your left, next to the supermarket”*



*“The hospital will be on your left, between the library and the Post Office”*

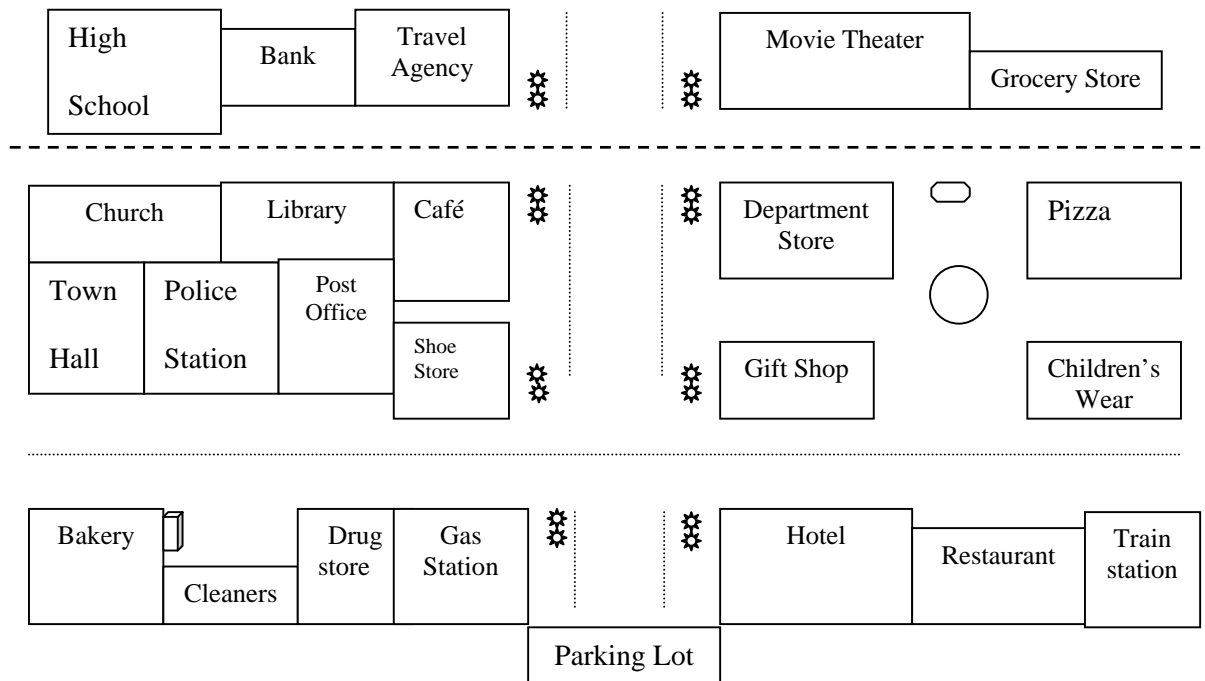
*“Go straight on Main Street until you get the first set of lights.”*

4. As most of the sentences are imperatives, they do not follow the structure of a simple sentence. This will call the students’ attention, as they know that in English the subject has to be present in every sentence. After eliciting ideas from the students to justify this change in structure, the teacher explains the Imperative and its function.

5. After giving all the expressions and vocabulary and having explained the Imperative, the teacher asks the students to work with their partners. Each student is supposed to direct his/her partner to get to different places in their city.

6. After giving them some time to work on the new vocabulary, the teacher gives each student a copy of a map for a listening activity.

Note: All the expressions given at the beginning of the class will serve as a scaffold for the following activities. This will enable students not only to identify and understand the instructions, but to follow them with more confidence.





Traffic lights



Telephone



Entrance sign

*Script:*

***Downtown Map*** (taken from *LISTEN UP!* by Heinemann International, 1991.)

*Look at the map. You are at the parking lot. Follow the instructions given on the tape to find eight places on the map. Write the correct number on the place where you are told to go. Remember you are at the parking lot.*

- 1. This is number one. Go down Main Street until you come to the first set of lights. Turn right at the light, and it's the first building on your right. Write number one on this building.*
- 2. This is number two. Start again at the parking lot. Go down Main Street, past the first set of lights, until you come to the second set of lights. Turn left at this light, and it's the second building on your right. Write number two on this building.*
- 3. This is number three. Start at the parking lot. Go straight on Main Street until you come to the top sign. Turn right at the stop sign, and it's the second building on your right. Write number three on this building.*
- 4. This is number four. Start at the parking lot. Go down Main Street until you come to the first set of lights. Turn left at the light, and go straight until you come to a telephone booth. It's just after the phone booth on the left-hand side of the road. Write number four on this building.*
- 5. This is number five. Start at the parking lot. Go straight on Main Street, until you come to the second set of lights. Turn right here, and keep going until you come to the entrance sign of the shopping mall. Enter the shopping mall here. It's the first building on your right. Write number five in this building.*
- 6. This is number six. Start at the parking lot. Go down Main Street until you come to a set of lights. Go straight at these lights, and keep going until you come to another set of lights. Turn left here, and it's the third building on the left. Write number six on this building.*

7. *This is number seven. Start at the parking lot. Go down Main Street, past the first set of lights, until you come to the second set of lights. Turn right here. Enter the shopping mall at the entrance on your right. Go straight and you'll come to a fountain. Turn left at the fountain and keep going. It's the building on your left. Write number seven on this building.*
8. *This is number eight. Start at the parking lot. Now go down Main Street until you come to the first set of lights. Turn left at these lights and keep going until you come to a telephone booth. It's the building straight across the street from the phone booth. The people here want to meet you very much. Write number eight on this building. What did you do wrong?*

7. After checking, the teacher asks the students to retell the directions they heard on the tape.

9. **Video Activity:**

The teacher plays the first act of Episode 2 of *Family Album, U.S.A.* with sound off.

After watching it, she asks them to retell what they think takes place in the story.

Then she gives them a copy of the script without the words and expressions learned.

She plays it again, but this time with the sound on to let the students complete the script.

*Complete Script:*

*Harry: Excuse me. Can you help me?*

*Vendor: Sure, what do you want?*

*Harry: Where is 83 Wooster Street?*

*Vendor: That's easy. Walk to the corner. Then make a left turn. Then walk two blocks to the traffic light. Make another left to Woodster.*

*Harry: Thank you. To the corner and then a left?*

*Vendor: Yeah. A left. Hot dog? Only seventy-five cents.*

*Harry: No, thank you. I have a dinner date.*

A little later, Harry is still lost. He goes to a pay phone and dials Susan's telephone number.

*Harry: 555-9470 ... and it's busy .... Try again.*

555-9470 ... and it's still busy. (He walks to a grocery store to ask for directions)

*Excuse me, ma'am. I'm looking for 83 Wooster Street.*

*Woman: Yes. Wooster Street is two blocks, and 83 is to the right, about two blocks.*

*Harry: Thank you, thank you!*

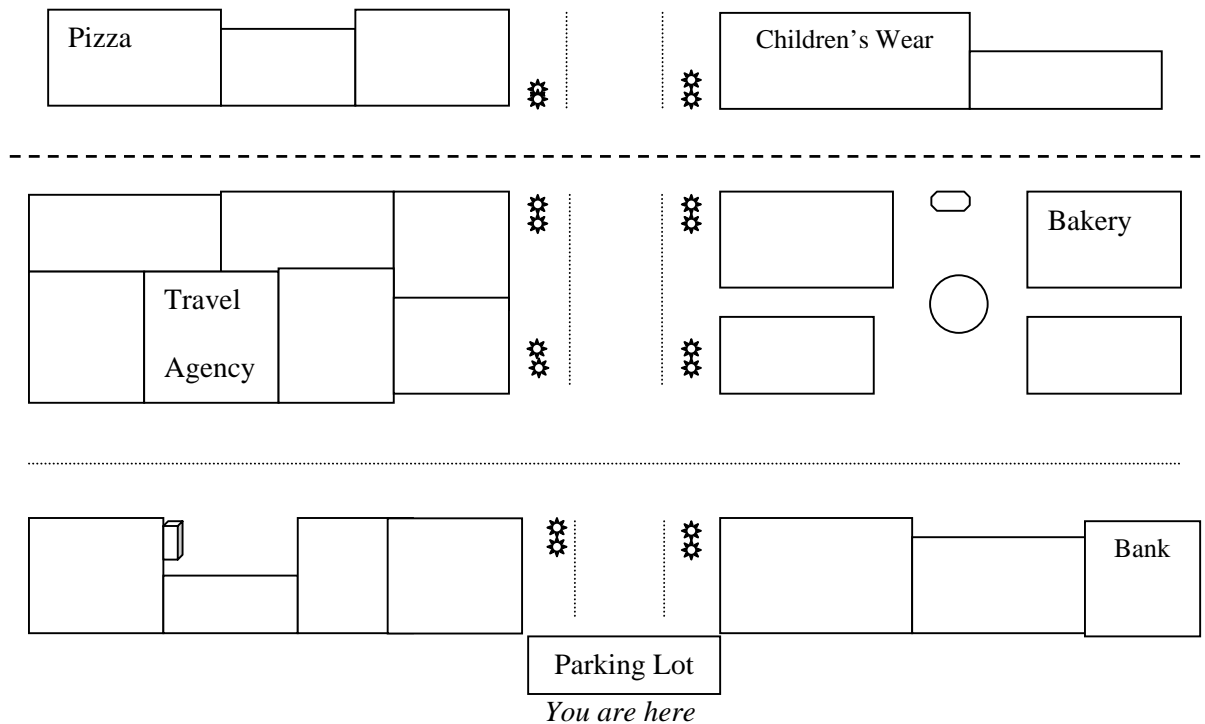
*Woman: You're welcome!*

10. After completing the script, students read one line each to check their work.

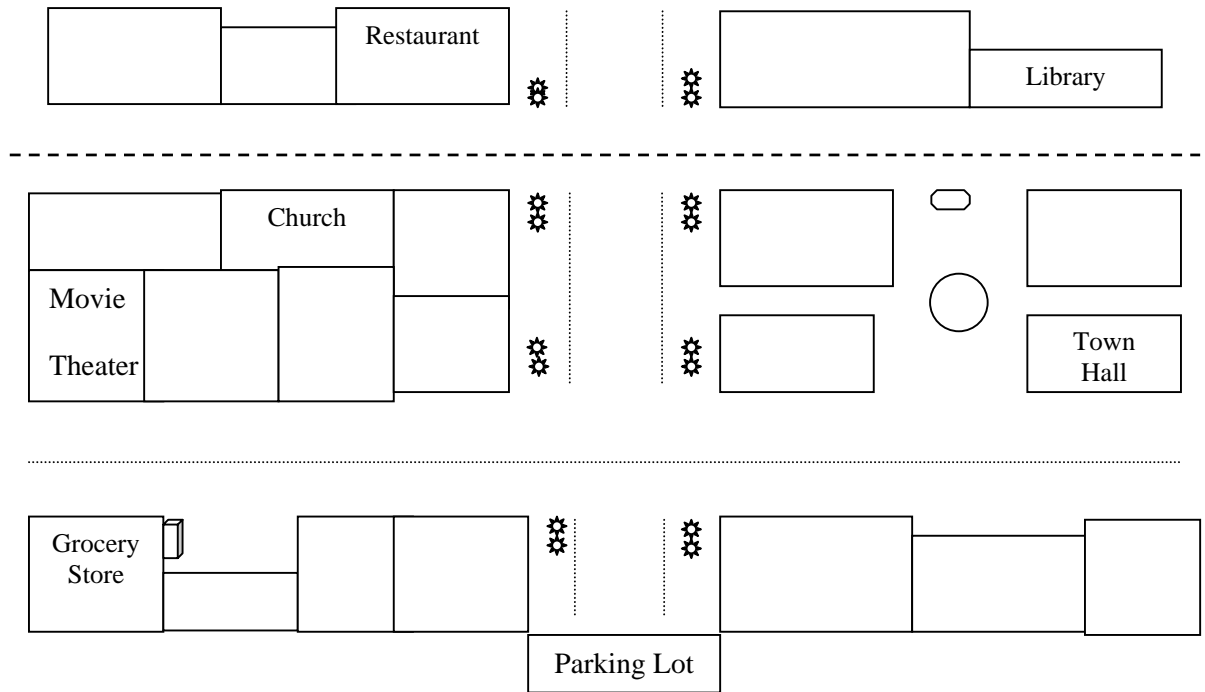
11. **Follow Up activity.**

Pair work. The teacher gives the students one map each. Although the maps are the same, the places indicated on them are different.

**Map 1**



## Map 2



The students with **Map1** will have to ask where *the church, the restaurant, the library, the Grocery Store, the movie-theater and the Town Hall* are.

The students with **Map 2** will have to ask where *Pizza Place, the bakery, Children's Wear, the travel agency and the bank* are.

Once they are finished, they look at their maps to check if they placed the different stores correctly.

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ON THE LESSON

Learning how to get to any place is a topic that interests students, especially adults. The possibility of their traveling abroad and getting lost is something that scares them a lot. This is the reason why I always give the vocabulary and expressions from the very beginning. The topic itself scares them. However, when they are given the necessary tools to face and handle the situation, students immediately get the confidence they lack.

This lesson places emphasis on listening and speaking because those are the basic skills students need to handle in these situations. Nevertheless, some activities on writing and reading are included for practice.

It is essential not to forget that students have different learning and cognitive styles. For instance, some students are better visual learners than aural learners. Therefore, when dealing with different kinds of material in class, teachers are giving their students the possibility of not only working on all of the skills, but on working on the one they have more strength, helping them feel more confident.

### ***LESSON PLAN 4***

**Theme:** Eating disorders (Anorexia)

**Group:** Level: Upper Intermediate / Advanced

Age: Adolescents

**Objectives:** Conversation class. Students will be able to express their feelings and share their experiences about this disease that affect teenagers so much.

**Procedure:**

1. Students are asked to write down how society affects their lives, which things and situations affect their feelings the most and how they try to cope with them.
2. After writing them down, they are asked to share them with the whole group (teacher only listens to them without interrupting) (she pays full attention to the content and makes sure that the message is clear in each case)

(One of the most common problems among adolescents nowadays is a disease called Anorexia Nervosa. If the students do not mention it, the teacher will ask them about it, about its causes and consequences)

Later she shows them some pictures of people who were victims of this disease.



Teacher asks students to reflect on the pictures and think of possible reasons that would take a person to get to such a limit.

3. Teacher plays a video about a girl who was also victim of this disease. She wrote a book called “Wasted”.
4. After watching the video, the teacher asks the students which they think is the relationship between her personal life and the title of her book. Students work in pairs and they write down a summary of her life, causes and consequences of having been a victim of Anorexia Nervosa.
5. Each student is given a passage, all of them based on people’s experiences (the writers of the passages have been or still are victims of Anorexia Nervosa)

Example of passages:

### **Passage 1**

#### ***Kris’s story***

*I struggled with weight for eleven years. I have been an anorexic and a compulsive overeater, and I have learned that the temptation to focus on the body is a manipulative little imp. I often asked myself “Why don’t you just stop thinking about food?” (It is interesting to note that upon asking many men how they relate*

to food, 99% of them replied “I just don’t think about it.”) Every time I went into a bookstore I always gravitated towards the Diet and Exercise section, all the while thinking, “Maybe this book has the cure-all. Maybe I’ll just try to get into awesome shape this one last time.” So I would proceed to get psyched about a new eating and fitness plan and then drop it a few days later. I used to think I was sabotaging myself, but now I know that deep down my soul was trying to tell me there is a far richer way to travel through life.

Women want to be thin and beautiful because the attainment of culturally defined “beauty” is a sere-fire recipe for happiness. If you do not yet know the secret of true happiness, it is silly to say that looking trim and gorgeous will not give you a sense of elation. It most certainly will. I mean, what sane person would put himself or herself through such hell if the rewards weren’t so great? After all, being fat with no hope of escape is a fate worse than any self-inflicted torture, right? WRONG. My friends, it is all a lie...a lie perpetrated by society that has sunk its little claws into your brain.

I am here to tell you that there is a joy inside of you that is far, FAR greater than any rush you might get in a size 2 dress. It is not a flimsy feeling of happiness. It is a state of bliss brought on by the fact that you are finally FREE!!!!!! If you think you can find this bliss through the appearance of your body, you will continue to pursue thinness until you discover, like I did, that it was all a lie. It took me eleven years to realize that none of this was worth it. I wish for all of you beautiful souls to know that the outside world is full of fool’s gold. The real treasure lies inside. If you knew for one minute how wonderful it feels to be free of your chains, you would never go back. You don’t know me, but if I ever see you in a bookstore, I will think you are beautiful inside and out. Much love and life...

## **Passage 2**

### ***Lisa’s story***

Looking down at my arms, I feel the pain all over again, but this time the pain hurts mentally. I can’t believe that I could have done this to myself, but I guess it had been a very trying time for me. After suffering with the disease they call anorexia nervosa for so many months, months that turned into years, I had finally begun to get back on track, or so they thought. Physically, I looked like a million dollars. I had finally put on enough weight to be healthy. My clothes fit perfectly and everything was looking up. But inside, something was not right. It was hard for me to accept all of the pounds coming back on and my emotions were in uproar. No one could know exactly what was going on in my head or else they might try to send



*me back to the doctor that I so dreaded seeing every week at the peak of my illness. So I kept it all inside, pretending that everything was great. That is when marks ranging from little scrapes to deep gashes began appearing on my arms and on my legs, anywhere that I could reach with sharp scissors or a knife. And being right-handed, all of those marks were, of course, on the left side of my body where I could easily reach. And no one noticed!!! I can't understand it now, but somehow just seeing the blood and feeling the pain helped me to forget about what was hurting me so much mentally. All the while that I was sick with anorexia, I kept hearing the religious family members telling me how it was against God's plan for me to be hurting myself in such a way. God would never want me starving myself because my body ultimately belonged to him, not me. Since I always felt close to the Lord, those comments helped me get back on track. I never thought of hurting myself more than I did and I definitely did not think of suicide but it does not make what I did any less unstable mentally. Now I see the little scars, some of which may be there for life just because of their deep beginnings. They are unpleasant reminders of a time when I was very unhappy with myself. They are ugly reminders of how I should count my blessings now, and be thankful that I was able to survive, both the anorexia and what issues that followed.*

**Passage 3:**

***Andrea's story***

*I was a chubby child growing up with a perfectly skinny twin sister. She seemed to receive all my parents and our peer's attention because she was thin. I felt ignored which developed my shyness. She dominated in almost everything that we did together. I thought that going on a diet would increase my self-esteem and get people to notice me. I did not starve myself, but I would limit my caloric intake to about eight hundred calories.*

*I would eat a bowl of cereal for breakfast so my parents would think I was eating properly. I wouldn't eat lunch. I'd make up excuses like I either did not have any money or I was not hungry and I would eat later. After school I would go to tennis practice on an empty stomach and exercise as much as I could for two hours.*

*My family always ate dinner together, so I would eat a full meal to keep everybody from assuming that I had an eating disorder. I'd always tell my mom that certain items were too fattening and I couldn't eat them.*

*Eventually, my parents and friends noticed my bad eating habits. They forced me to eat and would not leave my side. I denied my eating problem for a long time,*

*not even admitting it to my boyfriend until last year. I received a lot of support from my boyfriend, which I think helped me through my problem.*

*With terrific support from my friends and family, I now try to have a balanced diet instead of getting the fewest calories possible. I now feel more confident about my body and have a higher self-esteem.*

6. Each of the students becomes the person who wrote the passage she/he was given. In groups of four, they tell the story to the other members of the group as if it were their personal experience.
7. Pair work. After talking about the stories, each student selects the sentence that struck them the most, shares it with his/her partner and explains why he/she chose it.
8. Teacher passes out a handout with the lyrics of the song “Beautiful” by Cristina Aguilera. As the lyrics are not complete, students read them and figure out what the missing words might be.
9. Teacher has students compare their guesses with their neighbors.
10. The song is played and students listen to the missing words.

**Song: Beautiful**

*Don't look at me Every day is so wonderful  
And suddenly, it's hard to breathe  
Now and then, I get insecure  
From all the fame, I'm so ashamed  
I am beautiful no matter what they say  
Words can't bring me down  
I am beautiful in every single way  
Yes, words can't bring me down  
So don't you bring me down today  
To all your friends, you're delirious  
So consumed in all your doom  
Trying hard to fill the emptiness*

*The piece is gone and the puzzle undone  
That's the way it is  
You are beautiful no matter what they say  
Words won't bring you down  
You are beautiful in every single way  
Yes, words won't bring you down  
Don't you bring me down today...  
No matter what we do  
(no matter what we do)  
No matter what they say  
(no matter what they say)  
When the sun is shining through  
Then the clouds won't stay  
And everywhere we go  
(everywhere we go)  
The sun won't always shine  
(sun won't always shine)  
But tomorrow will find a way  
All the other times  
We are beautiful no matter what they say  
Yes, words won't bring us down  
We are beautiful no matter what they say  
Yes, words can't bring us down  
Don't you bring me down today  
Don't you bring me down today  
Don't you bring me down today*

11. After completing them, the teacher goes over the answers with the class, analyzing the vocabulary and the grammatical structure that may cause inconveniences.
12. Teacher has students relate the content of the video, the passages, the pictures and the lyrics of the song.
13. In small groups, students write down a short conclusion and read it to the whole class.

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ON THE SAMPLE LESSON

Among adolescents, Bulimia and Anorexia Nervosa are topics that always strike them because if they are not themselves victims of it, they always know someone who is. It is such an important topic that I always try to work on it with the advanced

groups. Notice that no grammatical structure was taught in this class as the emphasis was on the rest of the skills, especially on writing for reflection, on listening, on reading and on speaking for sharing insights.

Personally, when working on this topic with a group of adolescents, I happened to have a striking experience when one of my students admitted having suffered from this disorder. Of course, this struck us all, especially her classmates who started making her all sorts of questions. It was a really nice experience because she decided to share with them that part of her life without inhibitions. This proves that if teachers create a warm atmosphere in the class and a sincere bond with their students, they can do more than teach. They can become not only part of their learning process but also part of their lives.

## CONCLUSION

Through the whole paper, I have tried to show how the integration of the six language skills can make a difference in the language learning process. By now, readers should have an idea of those principles that I did not state directly in the first chapter but which I said I considered essential to be taken into account when teaching a foreign language. It was my intention to lead the readers through the whole paper to show these principles in a more complete way.

Now that the paper is coming to the end, I would like to conclude by adding the following principles that every teacher should bear in mind when being in front of a class:

- ♣ *Teachers should show their students that they really listen to them, try to understand what they want to say and how they feel. Creating an atmosphere of trust and respect in every class is essential for the students' performance. Teachers have to help students get insights into their own learning process as well as transform their negative feelings, which might otherwise block their learning.*
- ♣ *Communication is the way people express their thoughts, feelings or share information. They can do that using a pen and*

*a piece of paper. However, since human beings were given the gift of speaking, how can teachers avoid helping students use it in another language? Speaking is one of the most important skills to be developed. If teachers cared more about it, we would not even hear about students traveling to countries where the language is used and struggling mightily to express themselves at the most basic level without even being understood.*

- ♣ Teachers should encourage and support the idea that making mistakes is a natural and even necessary part of the learning process.*
- ♣ If there is a good classroom atmosphere, anxiety is reduced and the students' self-confidence is increased. Teachers should not "make" students speak but "have" and "help" students do so.*
- ♣ Teachers should always activate the students' content schemata (background knowledge of the content area of a text) and formal schemata (background knowledge of the formal, rhetorical and organizational structures of different types of texts). The feeling of security that this will generate on them will help them understand the listening and written information better. Listening and reading comprehension depend crucially on the students' being able to relate information from the text to their existing background knowledge.*

- ♣ *Teachers should always help learners say what it is they want to say by building together with the students a complete utterance. It is very common for students to have trouble sometimes in explaining concepts in the target language. In general, they feel they cannot do it because they are still not aware of their own knowledge. It is then when teachers have to help them realize they can do it by themselves, by guiding them along the same way she has been opening since the very first class they were together.*
- ♣ *Dealing with topics that are relevant to the students' lives, helps make the class more interesting and productive not only for their knowledge but also for their personal lives, experience and needs. Sometimes, students learn or talk about things in their foreign language class that would have never learned or talked about at school.*
- ♣ *Teachers should make use of a collaborative process to help students discuss a problem and respond together with solutions to it (through oral and written work). They should help them find voice and act in the world. This way, students will learn to see themselves as social and political beings.*

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