

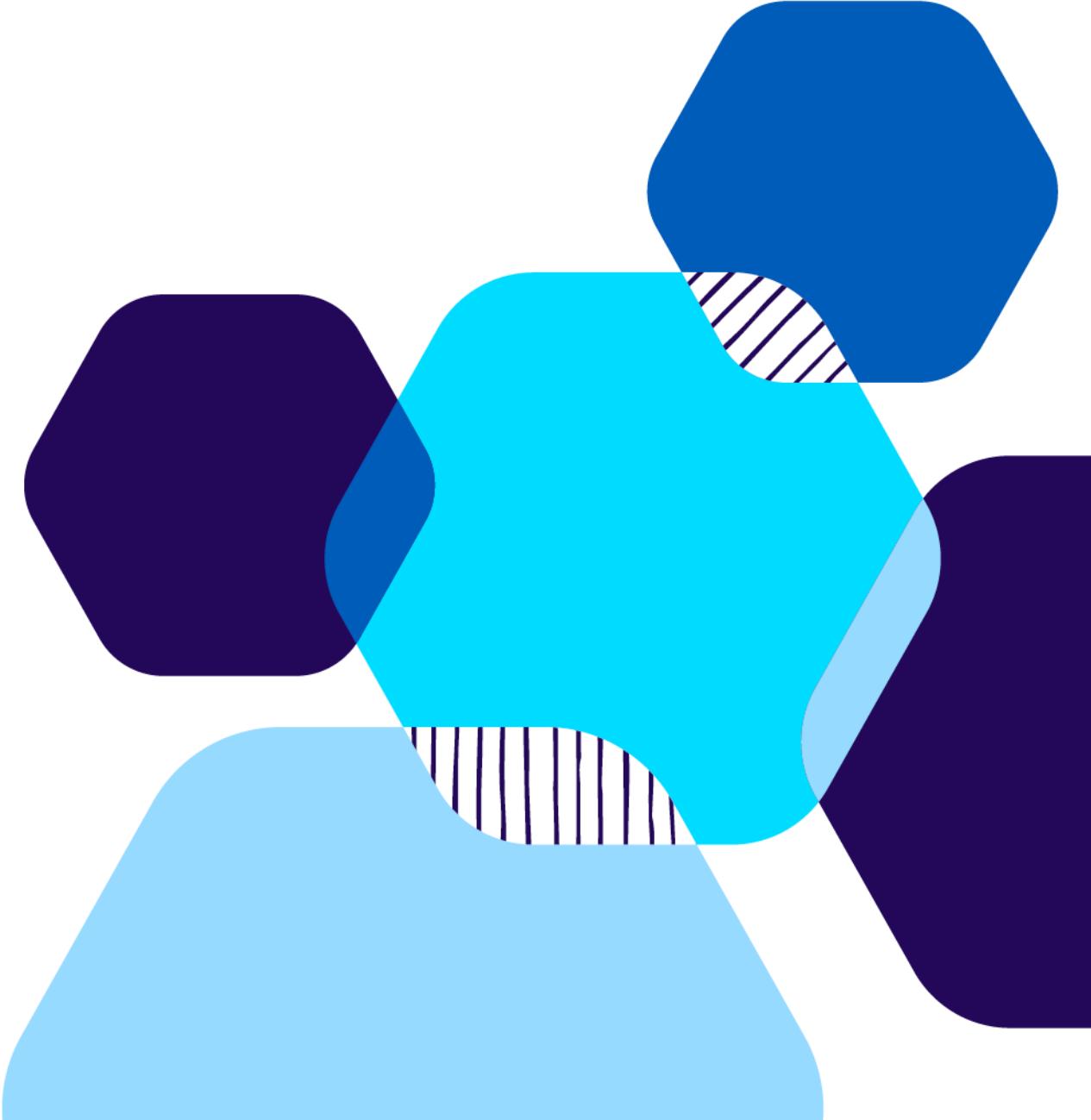
Teaching English

Managing communicative tasks in large low resource classrooms: Meaning and Practical Strategies

Presenters: Tiberius Barasa, Elizabeth Odhiambo
and Constance Okwiya

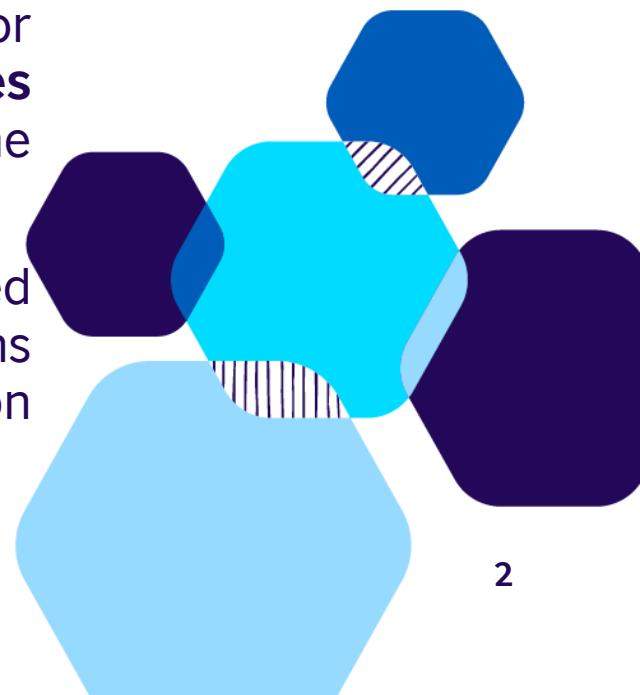
Saturday 24 January 2026

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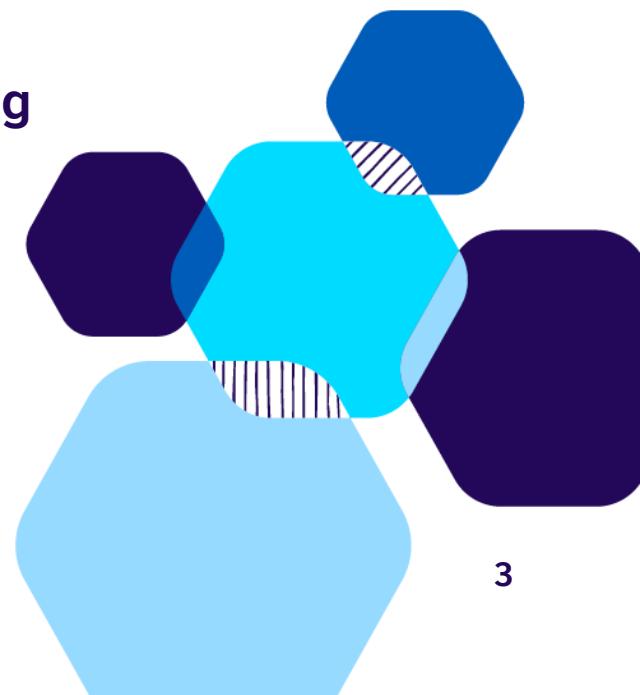
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Pre-webinar polls:

1. What usually limits communicative tasks in your classroom?	2. How do you usually handle limited resources during communicative tasks?
A. Too many learners in one class 66%	A. Use talk-based activities that need no materials 23%
B. Lack of teaching materials or technology 0%	B. Create simple materials from available resources 65%
C. Unequal participation (some students dominate, others stay quiet) 17%	C. Share few resources among many learners 6%
D. Pressure to finish the syllabus 17%	D. Avoid communicative tasks due to resource constraints 6%

Our speakers

Tiberius Barasa is a teacher of English and Literature with over 16 years of classroom teaching. He is the vice chairman of English Language Professionals Association of Kenya (ELPAK) having been involved as a presenter and organiser in both national and international teacher conferences. He has also organised and presented in several British Council Professional Webinars. He is also a Fulbright Scholar Fall 2024 having completed 6 weeks of professional training and practice at Kent state University, USA.



Our speakers

Elizabeth Odhiambo is a teacher of English and literature with over 15 years classroom experience. She is also a Teacher Trainer, Trainer of Trainees (ToT) and CBE champion with a passion for promoting advances in the delivery and teaching of English in diverse classroom environments. She holds various certification in Open Courses, 1 Million teachers' movement and is a mentor with affiliations to Wings to Fly, Elimu scholarship and leadership organisations like Leap Africa and 1MT.



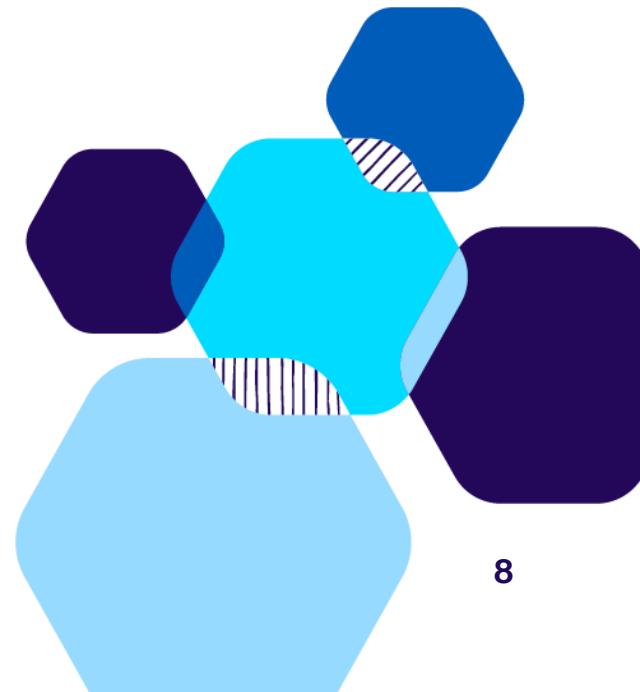
Our speakers

Constance Okwiya is a highly accomplished Secondary English and Literature Teacher at Shariff Nassir Girls Secondary School in Mombasa, bringing two decades of dedicated experience to her classroom. She serves as the Treasurer of ELPAK and has been instrumental in organising numerous Teacher Professional Development (TPD) workshops and webinars for her peers. She has done many courses, including the OPEN Spring 2025 Course on Fostering Student Motivation and Engagement from the University of Oregon, and the Professional Development for Teacher Trainers OPEN course (2023) from Arizona State University; and previously served as an English Access Micro-scholarship Teacher (2018-2019) and participated in the Lake Zone Access Curriculum Development Workshop in Tanzania in 2018.



Objectives

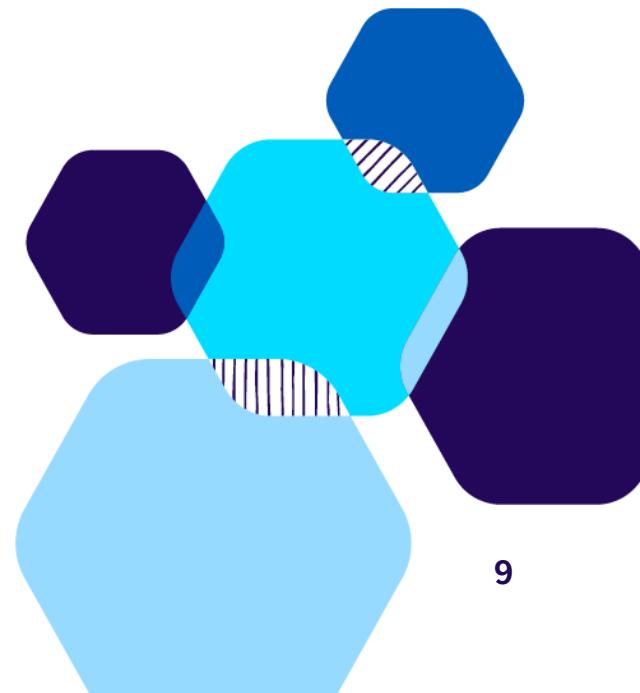
- Define communicative tasks in language teaching.
- Identify practical communicative activities suitable for large classes.
- Describe effective ways of managing communicative tasks in large, low-resource classrooms.
- Identify common challenges in implementing communicative tasks in such classroom contexts



Questions to start:

- 1. How do you define a ‘communicative task’?**
- 2. What is your biggest challenge when teaching a large class?**

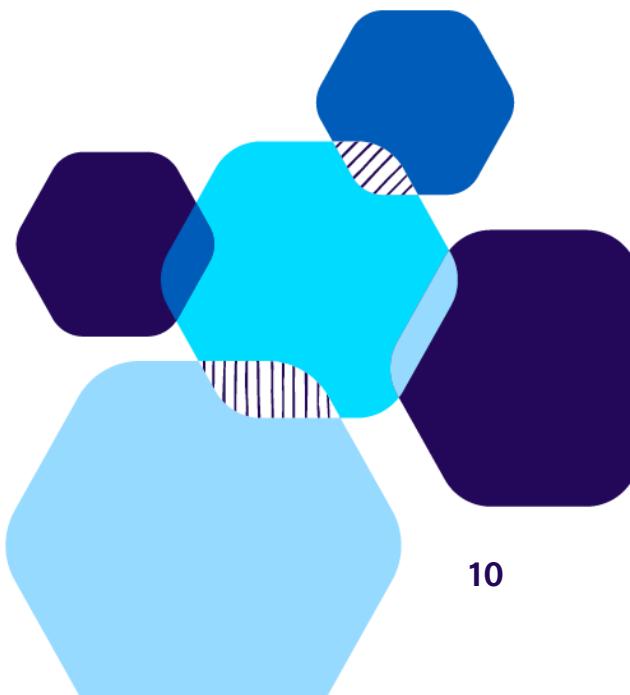
Share your thoughts on the above in the chat



Definitions

- **Communicative task:** An activity where learners use language to achieve a real purpose (e.g., solve, plan, explain, request).
- **Managing communicative tasks:** Organising, supporting, monitoring and concluding activities to enable learners to communicate meaningfully.

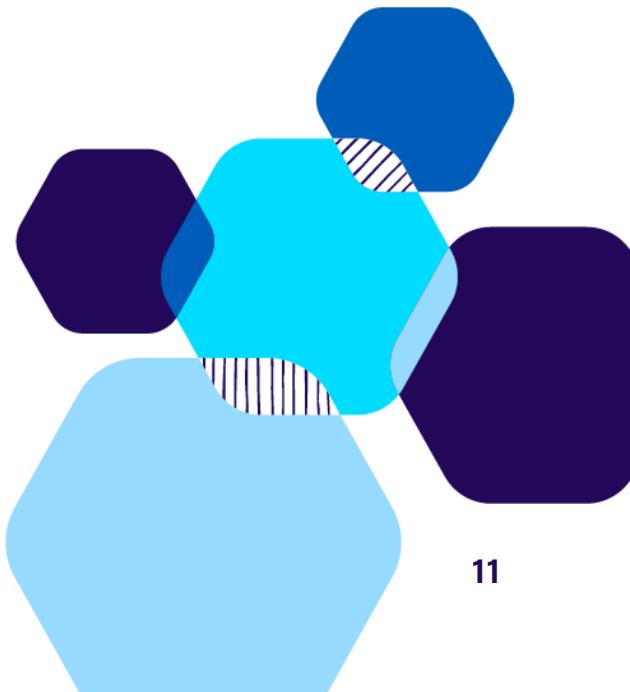
Article: Teaching large classes



**“Good teaching is not about having fewer students,
but about engaging every learner.”**

**How do we engage *all* learners
when numbers are high in our
individual classrooms?**

LET US SHARE IN THE CHAT

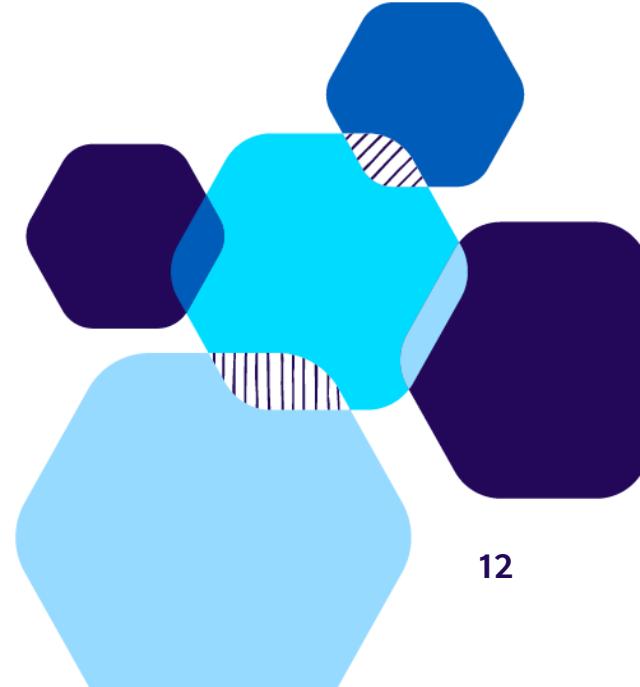


What does managing communicative tasks involve?

1. Identifying the purpose and expected outcome in the task to be carried out.
2. Choosing modes of presenting the task. (pair/group)
3. Preparing supporting material (prompts, visuals)
4. Giving simple and clear instructions while managing the tasks.
5. Modelling briefly what to do in each task.
6. Choosing groups and assigning roles strategically.
7. Setting time limits for each task.
8. Using space wisely.
9. Thinking of monitoring techniques.
10. Dealing with differentiation.



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Principles for large, low-resource classes

- A. Use student-generated materials instead of printed handouts.
- B. Use mixed-ability grouping for stronger learner support
- C. Use movement and classroom space to manage energy and focus
- D. Build learner confidence before correction.
- E. Use peer correction before teacher correction.
- F. Use real-life contexts familiar to learners.
- G. Break tasks into short cycles (5–10 minutes) to maintain focus
- H. Assign clear roles in groups
- I. Use the board as your main tool.
- J. Recycle old papers or books.

DISCUSSION

What practical tasks do you engage your learners with?

LET US SHARE IN THE CHAT



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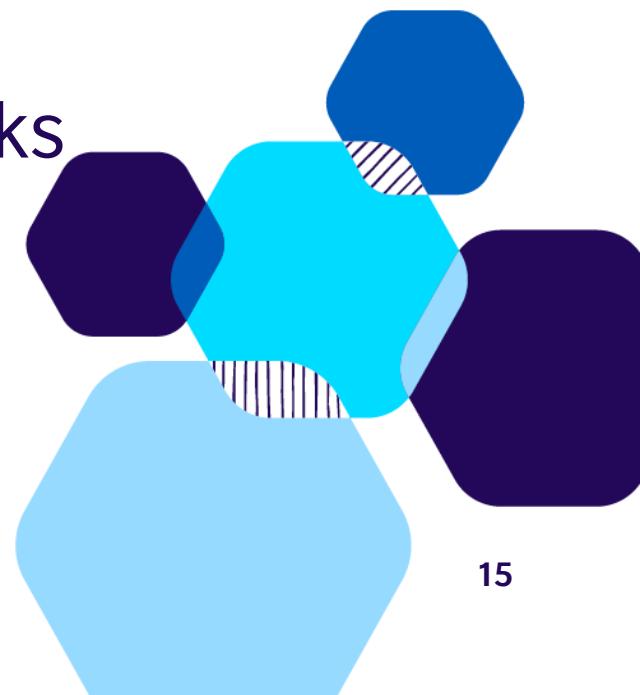
Practical examples of tasks:

Pair based

- Think–Pair–Share
- Role plays (brief, structured)
- Question chains
- Pronunciation drills in pairs
- “Find someone who...”

Group-Based

- Jigsaw reading/listening
- Problem-solving tasks
- Debates in rotating groups
- Information gap tasks
- Group storytelling / picture sequencing



Examples

Role Play

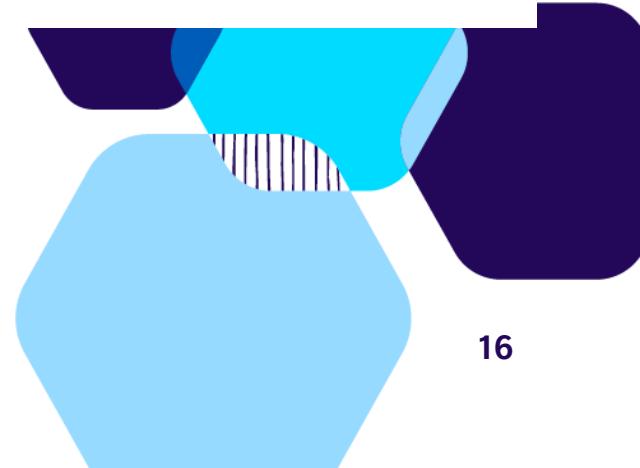
- Purpose-driven roles with simple prompts
- Teacher focus: language frames (e.g., “I think... because...”), set prep time, short performances

Management Tips (Integrated)

- Give time limits
- Use visual cues for noise control
- Provide language support cards
- Keep groups small for maximum talk time
- Rotate roles to protect shy learners

Activity 2: Problem-Solving Task

- E.g., decide how to use a class fund or plan an event
- Teacher focus: ensure negotiation, prevent dominance, assist low-confidence learners



Examples

Pictorial Charades

Materials: Chalkboard, simple drawings.

Steps :

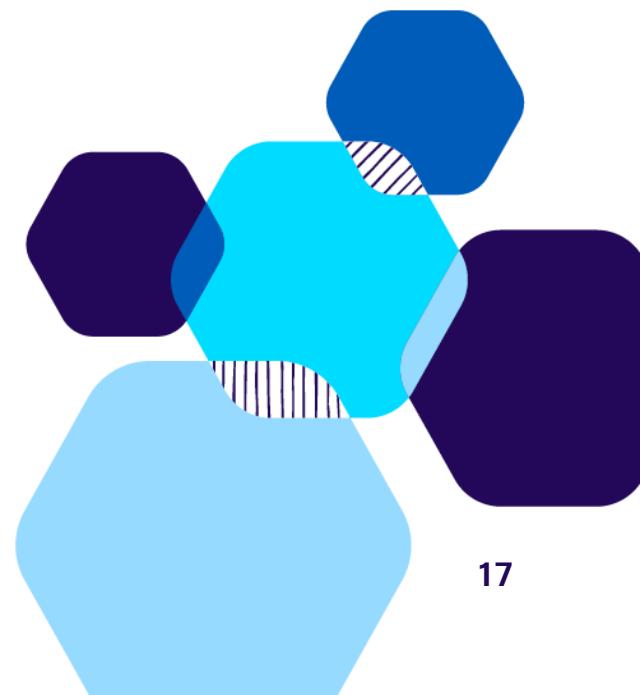
- Teacher draws simple pictures.
- Groups guess vocabulary, actions, or sentences.
- Or learners generate drawings.

Group Story-Building

Materials: None or one piece of paper.

Steps:

- First student writes/says a sentence.
- Next adds another.
- Continue around group.
- Present final story.



Examples

Opinion Corners

Steps:

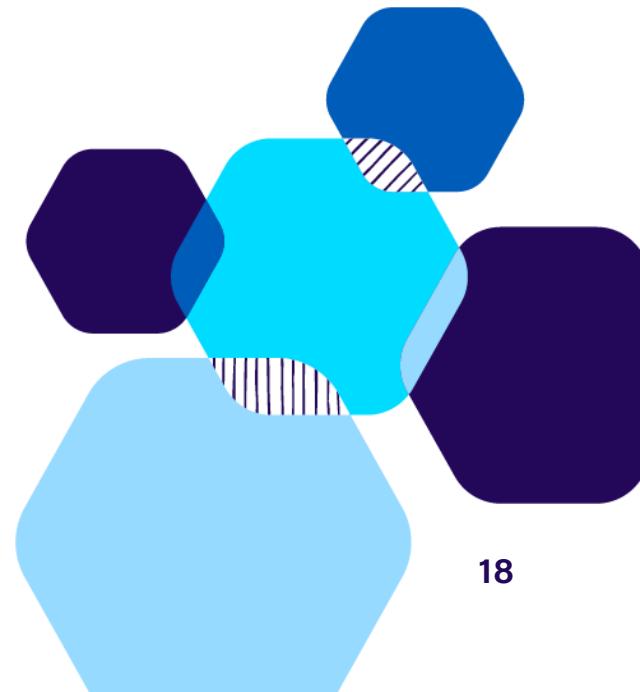
- Label corners: Agree / Disagree / Not sure.
- Read a statement.
- Students move and explain reasons.

Whisper Chain

Steps:

- **Teacher whispers a sentence to first student.**
- **Message passes along the row.**
- **Last student says it aloud.**

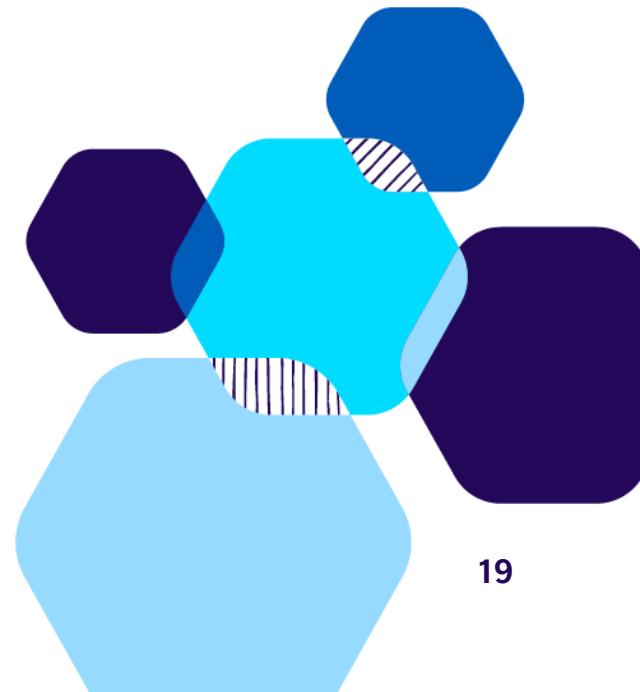
Focus: Listening accuracy and pronunciation.



Let's do this together

**What is your personal
experience with teaching
communicative tasks in
large, low resource
classrooms?**

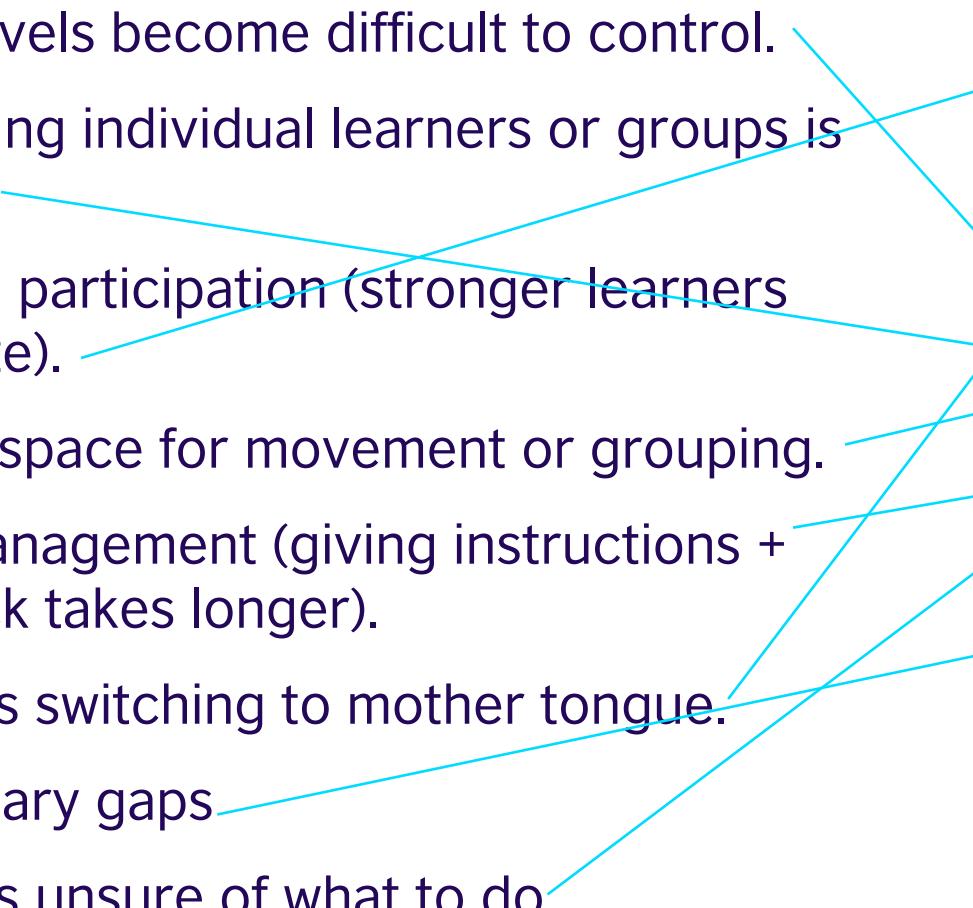
Share with us in the chat box



Common challenges and quick solutions: - please match

1. Noise levels become difficult to control.	A. Use turn-taking roles or speaking tokens
2. Monitoring individual learners or groups is harder.	B. Provide key phrases; set purpose clearly
3. Unequal participation (stronger learners dominate).	C. Non-verbal signal; group spacing
4. Limited space for movement or grouping.	D. Use modelling + check understanding
5. Time management (giving instructions + feedback takes longer).	E. Word banks, prompts, sentence starters
6. Learners switching to mother tongue.	
7. Vocabulary gaps	
8. Learners unsure of what to do	

Common challenges and quick solutions (answers)

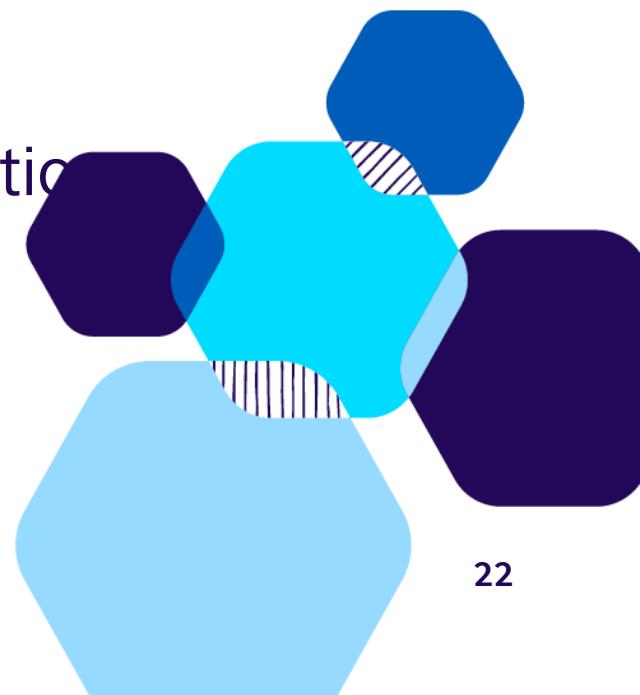
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- D. Use modelling + check understanding
- E. Word banks, prompts, sentence starters

Take away tips:

Before our discussion in the Telegram English Connects group on Friday, try the following and/or look at the resources on the next slide:

1. Using reusable task cards to save time.
2. Rearranging desks in a U-shape or “clusters” where possible.
3. Training learners on routines: “How we move”, “How we discuss”, “How we report”.
4. Using visual cues (pictures, diagrams) to reduce explanation time.
5. Displaying language support on the board for communication tasks.



TeachingEnglish resources

Article: “Your learners as a resource,” which gives ideas for tasks that promote *genuine communication*.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/managing-lesson/your-learners-resource>

including:

- Storytelling
- Evaluative questions
- Discourse completion tasks
- Problem solving
- Ranking tasks

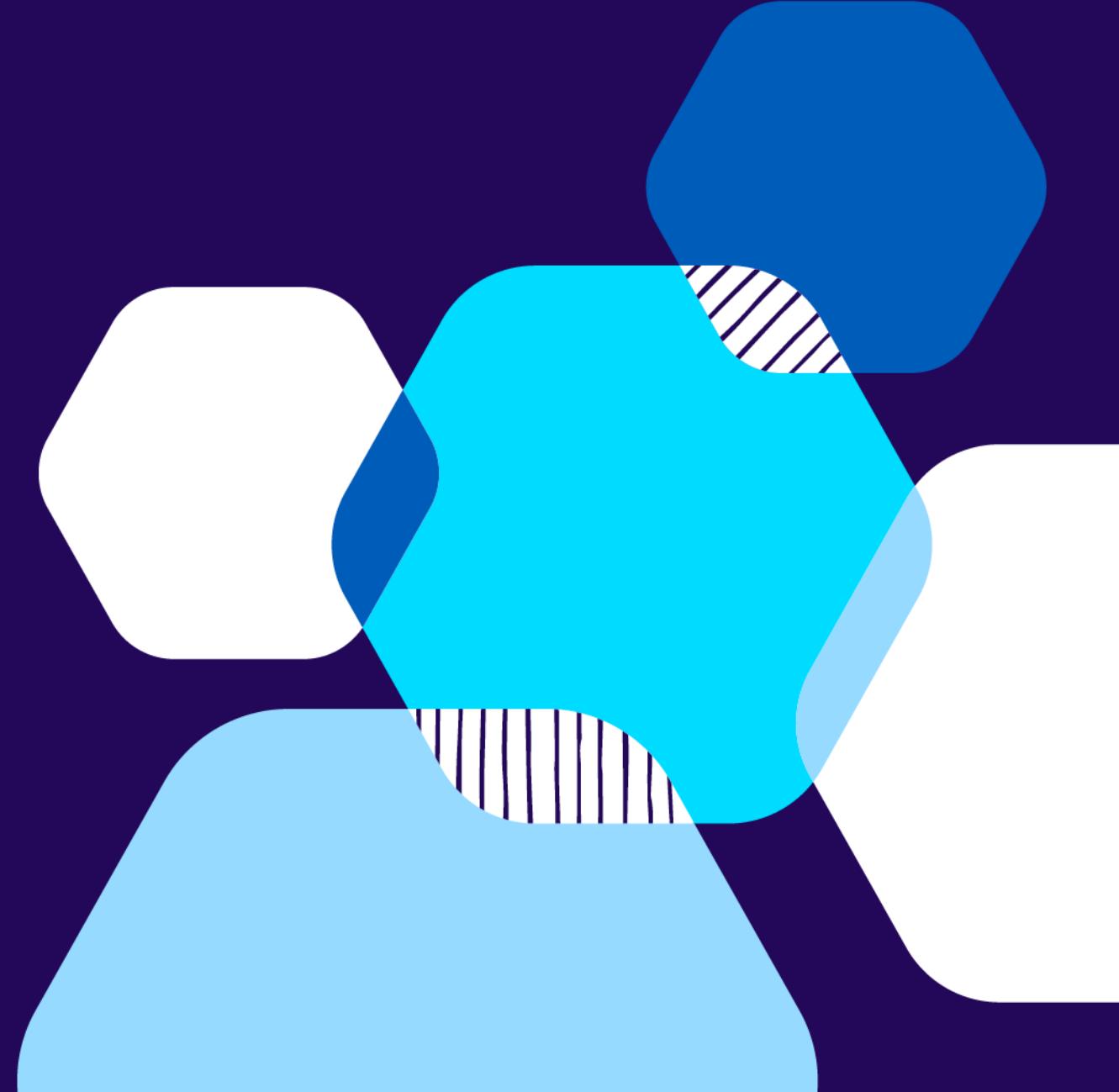
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[**Article: Teaching large classes**](#)

[**Communicative approach | TeachingEnglish | British Council**](#)

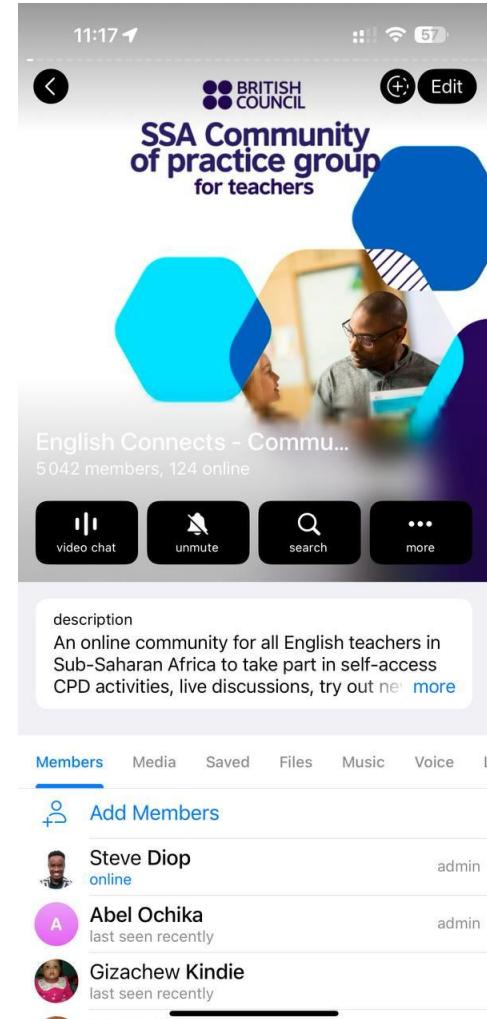
[**Article: Teaching large classes**](#)

Thank you!
Any questions?



Take part in next
Friday's Q&A session
with Tiberius, Elizabeth
and Constance

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<https://bit.ly/4lgZMm8>



Next webinar

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TeachingEnglish

Managing the lesson: Modern approaches

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Saturday
7 February
2026

15:00 GMT
16:00 Lagos
17:00 Khartoum
17:00 Pretoria
18:00 Addis

