

English Connects

Professional development for teachers

Unit 8: Making classes interactive

Participant
Handbook

Learning outcomes

The aim of this module is to equip teachers with techniques and activities to maximise communication and participation by students in their classes.

This unit complements the professional practice of 'Managing the lesson' from the CPD Framework for teachers <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/managing-lesson>

By the end of this module the participants will be able to:

- Identify a number of techniques, approaches and activities to increase the amount and quality of the teacher-student interaction in their classes.
- Understand better the rationale behind the techniques and approaches mentioned.
- Analyse techniques used by the teachers in the video footage.
- Compare the approaches shown with their own classroom practice.

1 Lead-in

1.1



Work in groups and discuss these questions. What words and ideas do you associate with the term, 'interactive'?

Now watch and listen to the first part of the commentary to check your ideas.

Notes:

1.2



In what ways do you make your classes interactive? Think of examples. Make a list to refer back to at the end of the video.

Notes:

2 Communicating through warm-up activities

2.1



What are the benefits of warm-up activities at the start of the class?

Notes:



Watch the video. Compare your answers with a partner. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

2.2



Working in small groups, discuss these questions:

- How did each warm-up activity stimulate different senses and learning styles?
- How did Anderson's game link back to a previous lesson?
- How did Adjoumani's class respond to their classmate's song?
- What kind of message did the song have?

3 Communicating at the start of the class

3.1



Watch the next section and number the teachers' actions in the order they appear.

- a) **Asking** students to **guess** the lesson topic.
- b) Using a real object to **elicit** vocabulary.
- c) **Asking** about homework.
- d) **Asking** learners to form their own questions.
- e) **Asking** today's date.
- f) Using a real object to **elicit** the lesson theme.
- g) Using a real object to elicit points relevant to the lesson.

3.2



The teachers in the clip **asked** students questions and **elicited** responses. What were the benefits for students?

4 Communicating through group work

4.1



Before you watch, circle the ways learners often work in your class. Answer the questions in a small group.

Whole class	in groups	in pairs	individually
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- Which interaction patterns do you prefer? Why?
- What factors affect the interaction patterns you choose for the lesson tasks?

4.2



Watch the section. Think about: What skills are students developing through group work?



Compare your answers with a partner. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

4.3



Work in a small group and discuss the questions.

- What specific task does Jules set his students?
- How does the task develop leadership and team-working skills?
- How does it develop organisational skills?

5 Communicating through pair work

5.1



Watch the section and listen to the commentary. Answer the questions.

- Identify 3 verbs (used by the teachers and the narrator) that show the benefits of pair work:

e-----
(swap information)

e-----
(examine differences)

s-----
(help each other)

- What was Jules' reminder to his students?

'You are here to _____'

5.2



What are the benefits of pair work? Compare your answers. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

5.3



Work in a small group and discuss the questions.

- What real life skills do pair and group work activities teach students?
- How will this benefit them in the future?

6 Communicating through instructions

6.1



Anestine uses concept questions to support her activity instructions. Watch the section. Then discuss the questions in a small group.

- What are 'concept questions'?
- How do concept questions make students communicate?

7 Communicating through feedback

7.1



Before you watch, work in pairs. Why are feedback stages important in a lesson? Complete the text with words from the box.

learning	end	cares	progress	feedback	students
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The ¹feedback stage allows teachers and students to assess ²_____ at the ³_____ of a task. It is an important stage because it shows the students that the teacher ⁴_____ about the work they have just completed. Showing the results of a task also encourages ⁵_____ to take responsibility for their own ⁶_____.

7.2



Watch the section. Think about:

- What steps does the teacher take to set up the feedback task?
- In what ways does the task give language practice?



Compare your answers with a partner. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

7.3



Work in a small group. Look at the suggestions for ways to make feedback stages more interactive. Tick (✓) the techniques that you have tried and put a question mark (?) next to ones you would like to try in the future. Can you think of any more to add to the list?

- Use Open Pairs
- Have students come up to the board and write or circle answers.
- Have students correct each other's answers.
- Praise good work as well as correct errors.
- Ask for a personal response to an activity, eg. *Did you like the activity? Was it useful?*

8 Reflection

8.1



Work individually first, then compare your responses in a small group. Look at the list you made at the beginning of the video when considering the first question.

- In what ways do you make your lessons interactive? Which approaches did you see in the video?
- Which approaches would work in your classroom? Are there any that wouldn't work? Compare your views with your colleagues.
- Which approaches are you going to try in your next class?

8.2 Action plan








What idea from the video do you want to try next time you go into class? What specific activities do you want to use? Why?






Notes:



9 Explore



In this video you saw the teachers using a variety of **interactive techniques and approaches** to make their classes more engaging. In this section you can follow up on the video by accessing a number of **articles, activities, and videos** on the BBC and British Council's **TeachingEnglish website**. These should provide you with further ideas, activities, knowledge, skills and techniques to fully maximise opportunities for interaction in your classes.

Sub-topic:	Title:	Link:	Type of Resource:	Summary:
Warm-ups	"Breaking the Ice"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/rachael-roberts/rachael-roberts-breaking-ice	Article Rachel Roberts 	In this article you can find ways of getting your students to know you and each other better!
Pairwork and Groupwork	"Increasing student interaction"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/increasing-student-interaction	Article Patrick Howarth 	This article discusses why we need our students to interact and puts forward some simple ideas to make this easier.
	"Working in Pairs and Groups"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/working-pairs-groups	Article Jo Bertrand 	This article discusses how you can use pairwork and groupwork to motivate and activate primary learners.
	"Classroom Dynamics"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/macapella/fiona-mauchline-classroom-dynamics-or-getting-dance-right	Article Fiona Mauchline 	This article gets you to think why it is necessary to vary the way students should interact in your classroom.
	"How to encourage involvement in groupwork"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/managing-how-encourage-manage-active-involvement-group-work	Video Merium 	Teachers in this video give advice about how you can increase participation, evaluate and maintain

Pairwork and Groupwork				discipline when grouping mixed-ability students.
	“Groupwork v. whole-class activities”	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/group-work-v-whole-class-activities	Article Simon Andrewes 	This article argues that groupwork can be combined effectively with whole-class discussion to add variety to your teaching.
	“interaction patterns – why and how?”	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/katherine-bilsborough/katherine-bilsborough-interaction-patterns-why-how	Article Katherine Bilsborough 	This article gives you some practical and creative ideas about how to pair students.
	“A Class Survey”	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/a-class-survey	Activity Malisa Iturain 	Here is an idea to get your class to get to know and practise English with their classes in your school!
	“Developing a Nation”	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/developing-a-nation	Activity David Done 	This is an engaging groupwork speaking activity for intermediate level and above classes.
	“Change place, change face”	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/change-place-change-face	Activity Marta Joyce Sabbadini-Essinki 	This is a simple idea for getting large numbers of students in your class to talk to each other!

Other Related	“Circle Game Activities” https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/circle-game-activities	Activities Joanna Budden Primary 2 	
	“Inclusivity in Learning” https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/rfw/inclusivity-learning	Article 	Are you sensitive to all your students’ needs and feelings? This article discusses ways in which we can include and involve our students more.

Answers

1.1: An *interactive* lesson generates meaningful **communication** between **teachers** and **students**. Meaningful communication from the teacher encourages students to **participate**. When **communication** and **participation** are present, then **learning** takes place. (Key words in bold)

2.2:

1. Physical movement in Anestine and Anderson's warm-up activities would appeal especially to learners with kinaesthetic learning styles (who like to 'learn by doing'). The physical movement both energises students and helps relax them by dispelling pent-up energy.

Adjoumani's song would especially appeal to students who like to learn by listening and most of the class enjoyed moving and clapping along to the song.

2. Anderson's game revised vocabulary learned in a previous lesson.
3. Adjoumani's class responded very positively to the song. There were smiles and many were moving and clapping along.
4. The song had a positive 'happy' message.

3.1: 1 e); 2 c); 3 f) ('malaria'); 4 g); 5 a) ('Health care'); 6 b) ('spraying'); 7 d).

4.3: **Suggested answers:**

1. Jules sets the students a roleplay activity in which one takes the role of 'Minister' and the others, 'journalists'.
2. The students must decide who will take which role in their groups and who is most suitable for which role. The task also encourages them to make decisions about fair allocation of responsibility.
3. Organisational skills: keeping to a time limit, preparing and getting the task done in the allocated time; organising roles; dividing up responsibility.

5.1: exchange / compare / support; '*You are here to communicate*'.

5.3:

1. Pair and group work develop:
 - critical thinking skills, eg. comparing, evaluating answers, exchanging ideas, giving opinions;
 - the ability to work together;
 - encourages students to have empathy and be supportive and helpful.
2. These tasks replicate real life situations in the world of work where ability to work collaboratively is important. When students work collaboratively, the action of sharing information and supporting each other increases their confidence in their own abilities.

6.1:

1. Concept questions (or concept checking questions) are designed to check students' understanding of what they have to do in a task (the same technique is also often used to check understanding of language points).
2. This questioning technique demands students give more detailed answers than simply, *yes / no*, therefore giving more opportunities for them to practise language. It also

demands that they listen properly to instructions, so it is much more effective than asking, 'Do you understand?', to which the answer is nearly always just 'yes'.

7.1: 2 progress; 3 end; 4 cares; 5 students; 6 learning.

Back page design

CODE for module

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