

Course Title: "Practical Ideas to Improve Our Day-to-day Teaching"

Dates: 16th-18th February, 2009

Venue: Instituto Austriaco Guatemalteco, 20 Avenida 20-45, Zona 16 Guatemala Ciudad, Guatemala C.A., Salón Audiovisuales.

Daily Timetable:

Session 1	8.00-9.45 Coffee
Session 2	10.15-12.00 Lunch
Session 3	13.00-14.20 Coffee
Session 4	14.40-16.00

Course-Programme

Day 1: Monday, 16th of February 2009

8.00-9.45 Becoming A More Efficient Classroom Manager 1

10.15-12.00 Becoming A More Efficient Classroom Manager 2

Synopsis

Becoming A More Efficient Classroom Manager

To me, efficient group management is in many ways the key teaching skill. Too many ELT techniques tend to prioritise either

- a) the individual over the group leading to a grindingly slow pace and bored students wasting time doing little or nothing whilst the teacher interacts with one student at a time, or
- b) stronger students at the expense of the weak, leading to division, time-wasting and missed opportunity.

I will offer 16 key classroom management tips based on what I feel were errors in my own teaching over the years, as well as things learnt from recent observations as a trainer.

The session will be highly practical – as indeed they all will - offering many easy-to-implement activities which any teacher can use. We will look at crucial areas, which are often left to teacher's instinct rather properly trained: how to use a board, giving instructions, making teaching more visual, eliciting, monitoring, improving your environment, dealing with problems/latecomers, successful implementation of pair and groupwork, etc. as well as how to gain students attention with interesting tasks.

Lunch

13.00-14.20 Getting To Grips With Listening 1

14.40-16.00 Getting To Grips With Listening 2

Synopsis

Getting To Grips With Listening

Listening is the primary and, in so many ways, the most important language skill but also the most complex and certainly the most difficult to teach well. Who amongst us can honestly say they are a very good teacher of listening? For years, I've been trying to work out how to systematically teach rather than just test Listening. This provocative session offers a range of practical techniques to help both teachers and students really make systematic progress with Listening.

Day 2: Tuesday, 17th of February 2009

8.00-9.45 Really Teaching The Four Skills

Synopsis

Really Teaching The Four Skills

Our coursebooks contain ever more skills headings but how often ...

1. do we skip through listening and reading texts in search of new words and grammar with no real focus on the skills themselves or how to improve them?
2. are speaking activities mainly accuracy-focused as students try to verbalise the new structures/words/expressions we've just 'taught' rather than engage in real speaking?
3. do we assign any substantial writing activities as 'homework' and then pray that students do them with as few mistakes as possible so our marking load is not too great?!

This first session will look at some of the choices we face and decisions we need to make if we are really to teach the skills. We will pick up from where we left off with listening and try out my favourite activities for each of the other skills

10.15-12.00 Helping Lower Level Students To Speak

Synopsis

Helping Lower Level Students To Speak

The session begins from the premise that many teachers find it difficult to persuade their students to speak English in class, particularly in secondary schools and with large classes. We will look at some of the reasons for this, from the point of view of both teacher and student, and I will offer many practical solutions - which could radically improve your teaching life! This will include simple suggestions for oral testing.

Lunch

13.00-14.20 Pronunciation Teaching

Synopsis

Pronunciation Teaching

In my opinion, teachers should be doing a lot more pronunciation work than is traditionally the case. I will illustrate a series of practical, easy-to-implement ideas for 11 to 16 year olds intended to encourage both teachers and the learners themselves to do more, including, awareness-raising, modeling, copying and discriminating sounds, stress and intonation, as well as all aspects of connected speech. Again, full of practical ideas you can use with your own classes.

14.40-16.00 Oral Correction

Synopsis

Oral Correction

We will reflect on whether, when and then, most importantly, how we should correct students' oral mistakes. In my experience, many teachers tend either

- to stifle classes by over-correcting too quickly and too often, or
- to under-correct often to the dissatisfaction of students,

Furthermore, we often use a limited range of techniques when many other reactions to errors are possible. I will demonstrate a large variety of extremely practical options.

Day 3: Wednesday, 18th of February 2009

8.00-9.45 Helping Students To Read a) More And b) Better

Synopsis

Helping Students To Read a) More And b) Better

Most classroom reading activities end up becoming intensive, slow, often painful reading, as students read word by word and teachers all too often turn into walking dictionaries, or end up begging their reluctant students to read more. This practical workshop will show you a large number of ways to help students enjoy reading both in and out of class. The aim will be to get students to read both more and better.

10.15-12.00 Writing And Written Correction

Synopsis

Writing And Written Correction

The key to teaching writing is ...

- a range of appropriate, motivating, meaningful tasks, and
- effective correction

and it is the latter, effective correction, which rarely gets talked about, yet it is the part which takes most time and causes teachers most grief.

Imagine how much more satisfying teaching would be if all the weekends and evenings that we give up to mark students' written work really made a difference! What if students actually remembered and learnt from our efforts?

I believe there's a lot we can do to make this happen. A highly practical workshop offering a range of easy-to-implement techniques designed to make your marking more effective.

Lunch

13.00-14.20 How To Befriend Classroom Observation

Synopsis

How To Befriend Classroom Observation

The rest of the afternoon will be dedicated to class observation. Personally, I have learned more about teaching through observing classes than anything else I have done in ELT, apart of course from actually teaching myself. My research suggests this is true for most teachers who have had the privilege of observing a lot of teachers in action. Yet observation remains scary and negative for many teachers and I believe it is our job as trainers to change this situation.

I will illustrate some of the key things I have learned from observations and show a video to illustrate some of my practical suggestions. I will argue that for too long teaching has been too ephemeral, and that observation should be seen as a tool and a friend. I will finish by suggesting ways to help 'sell' it to teachers and to implement it more regularly in our institutions. This will include (peer) observation schemes.

14.40-16.00 Open Session

Synopsis

Open Session

A flexible session, hopefully lead or at least driven by you. Our aim will be to tie up 'unfinished business' (all the outstanding bits and pieces from previous sessions), and workshop all the questions which will have come up along the way and which we haven't yet had time to deal with.