

A ZEST FOR LITERACY

Some of my favourite “energizing” activities presented in this workshop were adapted & built on from the sources listed below. I hope you will leave today with something you can use, adapt or create something new out of for your next lesson.

Have fun! Paula Mannington

Acknowledgements

“Your Magical Brain”: workshop offered by *Gary Anaka* at the ELSA Net annual PD day in the Fall of 2005.

Gary’s Message: Our brains need movement, repetition, fun & concrete activities to optimize learning.

“Turning Lead into Gold”: workshop offered by *Mark Brodie* at the BC TEAL Mini-Sessions Series in the Fall of 2006.

Mark’s Messages: Combine mental & physical activity; Get students working away from the confines of their desks or tables; Introduce novelty items (e.g. noise makers, fly swatters, or balls); Adapt oldies but goodies (e.g. Life-size “Go Fish”). Have fun & encourage laughter!

“Effective Teaching Strategies for Low Level Learners”: workshop presented by *Jill Collingwood; Janet Massaro, Janis Fair, Lisa Herrera, & Brenda Horth* at the ELSA Net PD day in the Fall of 2006.

Main Messages: Develop a consistent approach to new material; Find good volunteers to help out; Use the same pictures to create large & small picture vocabulary cards & attach same pictures to reading, writing & game activities; Talk sticks for student teachers; Active learning is effective; Music & movement.

“Revealing the Unseen and Unforeseen Side of the Iceberg”: workshop presented by *Craita Isbasecu* at the Frontier College *Communities Coming Together* conference in December 2007.

Craita’s Messages: Create a friendly environment; Embrace humour & laughter; Use “attention catchers”; Provide costumes & props when possible.

Cross-Over Clap

Objective: To be able to ask and answer questions about names, including
the spelling of own name.

Target Dialogue: A: What is your name?

B: My name is Paula (*student states own name*).

A: Please spell it.

B: P-a-u-l-a (*student spells own name*).

Materials: None

Class Arrangement: Seated pair work and whole class Talk-Line.

Procedure:

1. DEMO First:

a). Pairs face each other. Hands up ready to clap partner’s hand.

b). Each syllable that student A states is accompanied by a cross-over clap with

partner’s opposite hand. Since all the words in “What is your name” are

monosyllabic, there would only be 4 cross-over claps.

c). Student B’s answer would require 5 cross-over claps since “Paula” has 2
syllables.

d). Complete dialogue.

2. Students practice in seated pairs.

3. Class practices together in a Talk-Line.

***Note:** If students wear a name tag that hangs around their neck, then they can refer to it if they know how to read letters. Try to arrange the pairs or Talk-Line so students with stronger print awareness are paired with orally skilled students. This helps students identify their strengths & areas they can benefit in from peer mentoring.

Other Ideas:

- Use cross-over claps to practice other basic dialogues such as greetings (as students arrive); farewells (as students leave); asking & giving personal information (e.g. telephone number; address; postal code).
- Use cross-over claps to practice pronouncing & spelling new content vocabulary. Ensure picture prompts & spellings of new vocabulary are visible during practice sessions. Try not to use more than 8-12 new target words.

Microphone Introductions

Objective: To be able to state name in an audible tone.

Target Dialogue: “My name is Paula.” (*Student states own name*).

Materials: Microphone (does not need to work—just a prop)

Class Arrangement: Chairs in a circle

Procedure:

1. Sitting in a circle. Each student states “My name is...” in a regular tone.
2. Second Round: Each student states “My name is...” in a very quiet tone. Instructor demos first with an exaggerated “Shhh” & low whisper.
3. Third Round: Instructor pulls out microphone to pass around circle. Each student states “My name is...” in a very loud tone into microphone. They can stand up if they like. Some extroverted students have even stood on chairs!

***Note:** If students are encouraged & supported to speak English loudly in the safety of the classroom, they may begin to find the courage to speak English in an audible tone outside of class.

TIP: Encouraging students to practice saying/spelling their own & classmates’ names on a regular basis is a basic but important part of building community in the classroom, especially when there is continuous intake, a diverse crowd, & inconsistent attendance.

Other Ideas:

- *With Microphone:* Students practice basic guided dialogues in pairs. Pairs present dialogue using a microphone in a “televised interview”

format to class. Interviews can be videotaped & shown on TV to class after. Lots of spin-off possibilities!

- ***With or Without Microphone: Name Chain Game in a Circle***
 - **Basic:** Teacher states name (e.g. "Paula"). First student states own name & teacher's name. Third student states own name, student #1's name, teacher's name. Continue around circle.
 - **More Difficult:** Teacher states "My name is Paula". First student states own name ("My name is...") & teacher's name ("Her name is..."). Continue. Emphasize **My, Her, or His.**
 - **Most Difficult:** Add a topic (e.g. food) to above name review. For example: Teacher states "My name is Paula. I like carrots" (*holding picture of carrots*). First student states "My name is Kulwant. I like apples (*holding picture of apples*). Her name is Paula. She likes carrots." Continue. **My, His, Her, & I, She, He** prompts can be written on board & referred to.

Activities with Balls

Objective: To be able to greet people and give information.

Target Dialogue: Blue ball: Hello. (*Written in blue*)

Red ball: How are you? (*Written in red*)

Blue ball: I'm fine thank you. (*Written in blue*)

Materials: 2 soft/rubber balls: blue & red. Coloured markers: blue & red.

Class Arrangement: Chairs in a circle

Procedure:

1. Review colours using balls. Review basic dialogue written on board using balls to tap words that correlate with its colour. DEMO first.
2. Two different students are holding one of the coloured balls. Student holding blue ball states 1st sentence. Student holding red ball states 2nd sentence. Student holding blue ball states 3rd sentence.

3. When dialogue is completed, each student makes eye contact with another student and tosses the ball. Two different students are now holding one of the coloured balls. Repeat dialogue.

***Note:** Add each student's natural response to "How are you?" if they have one (e.g. "Good thanks" or "I'm tired"). You can create a list of different responses before playing this game, write them on the board & refer to them. This helps reinforce what they know & already use.

Rationale for Coloured Balls: Shows when speakers change in a dialogue.

Other Ideas:

- Toss a single ball randomly (ensure eye contact first!) around circle to review numbers (cardinal & ordinal), alphabet, names, days, months...etc.
- Sit or stand in 2 lines with students facing each other. Toss ball back & forth. Student catching ball states number, letter, day...etc. in sequence being reviewed.
- Practice counting by fives: Class counts from 1–60. Student holding red ball stands up every time a number ends in "5". Student holding blue ball stands up every time a number ends in "0". A third student records these numbers in sequence on the board. Final number line on board counts by fives to 60. Can be extended to "Telling Time" topics, with student recorder at board writing 5–60 on large clock diagram.

Calendar Review

Objective: To be able to recognize days, months, numbers, & years. To be

able to participate in a team activity.

Materials: White/chalk board or flip chart paper. 2 Fly swatters.

Class Arrangement: Assign class into 2 teams. Give each team a team name (e.g. Yellow & Green). Each team stands in a line facing the board. Student at front of line is holding a fly swatter. Mark a foul line on the floor so students know where to stand behind.

Procedure:

1. Create a large grid with 9 squares (like a tic-tac-toe game).
2. Insert vocabulary students need to review or may be having difficulty with into grid.

For example:

2008	30	Tuesday
Thursday	November	13
September	2080	Saturday

3. Teacher (or volunteer student-teacher) calls a word from the grid. First student to “swat” the correct word gets a point for their team.
4. Make sure everyone gets a few turns. Winning team gets a candy (optional).

***Note:** This is a noisy activity that can get very competitive!

Other Ideas:

- Use the fly swatter activity to review content specific vocabulary (e.g. food; clothes; money; survival sight words...etc.). You can insert words or authentic pictures of target words into grids.
- Calendar & time vocabulary are essential basic skills that need to be practiced & applied regularly (e.g. work schedules; child’s school schedule; medicine schedules; bills; appointments...etc).

- Have a large wipe-off calendar in the class. Choose a different student every month to add the name of the month, numbers, & year. Each student creates their own 8.5 X 11 calendar every month. Review orally as a class regularly. Choose a student teacher to use a “Talk Stick” & lead class through reviews (e.g. “How many days in November?” Tap each day as class counts to 30).

Music & Movement

Brenda Horth (ELSA Net PD, Fall 2006) introduced me to the idea of using simple TPR commands with music to energize a low level evening class. We know music & lyrics are a wonderful medium to use with higher level English language learners but finding songs with concrete lyrics appropriate for adults with little vocabulary or limited reading skills is not always easy. I tried Brenda’s idea of using The Proclaimers song “I’m gonna be (500 miles)” in my class after coffee break one night. The response from students was overwhelmingly positive! I have built on these ideas over the past 2 years and use the following approach (more or less) when introducing a new song.

First class:

1. Introduce new vocabulary: Teacher does actions while giving new words. Encourage students to model actions. No talking is necessary or expected until student is ready (this varies greatly!).
2. Some students are keen to see words written immediately. Write new words on board but reading is not the focus yet.
3. Put on music & move!

Second class:

1. Review actions & words without music.
2. Write words on board. Elicit spelling. Emphasize first & last letter sounds.
3. Put on music and move!
4. Follow-up with a handout of the words & sequence for routine.

Third class: Follow steps 1–4

5. Put handout on overhead. Teacher taps out words with a “Talk Stick”

(we use a long wooden metre stick) & leads class through reading.

Fourth class & onwards: Follow steps 1–5

6. Ask students to volunteer as a student teacher. Give them the “Talk Stick”. They tap the words projected from the overhead & lead

class through the reading.

Highlights

- ❖ Can be a real confidence builder!
- ❖ Class claps & cheers for volunteer teacher. Builds camaraderie.
- ❖ Low literacy students may not be able to read these words out of context, but they **do** memorize them & enjoy being a volunteer teacher. Inclusion can begin building a belief in the ability to read.
- ❖ Older students or those with a disability have participated fully from a seated position.
- ❖ Students know we do this every night after coffee. New students are comforted by the predictability of the routine & just follow along.

Y.M.C.A

Circle. Circle. Circle. Stop.

Circle. Circle. Circle. Stop.

Stretch.

Stand up: walk, walk, walk, walk.

Sit down: don't walk, don't walk.

Stand up: walk, walk, walk, walk.

Up. Down. Up. Down. Up.

1-2-3-4-5

Y.M.C.A.

Y.M.C.A.

Turn right. Turn left. Turn right. Turn left. Turn right.

Look up: point, point, point, point.

Look down: touch toes, touch toes.

Look up: point, point, point, point.

Up. Down. Up. Down. Up.

1-2-3-4-5

Y.M.C.A.

Y.M.C.A.

Turn right. Turn left. Turn right. Turn left.

Right hand: in, in, in, in.

Right hand: out, out, out, out.

Left hand: in, in, in, in.

In. Out. In. Out. In.

Alley Cat

Heel. Heel. Heel. Heel.

Open. Close. Open. Close.

Right foot. Right foot. Right foot. Right foot.

Forward. Forward.

Back. Back.

Left foot. Left foot. Left foot. Left foot.

Forward. Forward.

Back. Back.

Right knee. Left knee. Right knee. Left knee. Right knee. Left knee.

Jump. Clap.

Heel. Heel. Heel. Heel.

Open. Close. Open. Close.

Right foot. Right foot. Right foot. Right foot.

Forward. Forward.

Back. Back.

Left foot. Left foot. Left foot. Left foot

Forward. Forward.

Back. Back.

Right knee. Left knee. Right knee. Left knee. Right knee. Left knee.

Jump. Clap.

Heel. Heel.

Open. Close.

Right foot. Right foot.

Forward.

Back.
Left foot. Left foot.
Forward.
Back.
Right knee. Left knee.
Jump. Clap.

Forward. Knee. Back. Step.
Forward. Knee. Back. Step.
Jump. Clap.

Deck the Halls

Look up. Look down: Falalalalalalalala

Head right. Head left: Falalalalalalalala

- Clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap,
clap

Hand up. Hand up: Falalalalalalalala

Hand down. Hand down: Falalalalalalalala

- Clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap,
clap

Touch eyes. Touch toes: Falalalalalalalala

Touch knees. Touch nose: Falalalalalalalala

- Clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap

Look up. Look down: Falalalalalalalala

Head right. Head left: Falalalalalalalala

Hand up. Hand up: Falalalalalalalala

Hand down. Hand down: Falalalalalalalala

- Clap, clap, clap, clap

Touch eyes. Touch toes: Falalalalalalalala

Touch knees. Touch nose: Falalalalalalalala

- Clap, clap, clap, clap

(Thank you to Craita Ibasecu for the idea of adding costumes!)

Mini Brain Breaks & Positive Affirmations

**NOTE: Accompany all words with movement*

#1 Stand up. Stretch up *(reach up to the ceiling with hands).* **Stretch down** *(bend over & try to touch as close as possible to the floor).* **Stand up. Shoulders** *(roll shoulders back & forward).* **Breathe in** *(exaggerate so they can hear).* **Breathe out** *(Blow out loud so they can hear).* **Fingers** *(move all fingers & shake hands).*

#2. After a class reading exercise (like the music & movement exercise), we repeat the sentence “I can read English–No problem!” with the following actions attached to each word:

<i>WORD</i>	<i>ACTIONS</i>
I	Point to self
can	2 fists clenched & shake
read	Mime reading
English	Deep smile & fingers use a pincer grasp to mime a stretch of the mouth as if to pull the word “English” from centre of lips across face.
No problem!	Exaggerate “No” while hands start crossed in front of body and stretch out to the sides by end of “problem”.

#3. Students seem to enjoy this stretch after the music & movement exercise before moving into the final hour.

<i>WORDS</i>	<i>ACTIONS</i>
I feel happy	Right hand crosses to left shoulder
I feel healthy	Right hand stretches to touch back of head
I feel terrific	Top side of right hand stretches to rest on back. Follow these words & movement with a right clenched fist “hurray!” movement.
*Note: Repeat the entire exercise using the left hand	

#4. This brain break creates a lot of smiles!

Right hand – Left shoulder (*Exaggerate words & movement*).
 Left hand – Right shoulder.

SQUEEZE...HUG!!!