

THE RESOURCEFUL TEACHER Series

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THE PRINCIPLED COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

Seven criteria for success



2.8

Rote learning

Focus	Memorizing song lyrics
Level	Any
Time	20-25 minutes
Preparation	Choose a song that is interesting for your students, with words that are clear enough to hear. Write out the lyrics, leaving gaps for some words, and make a copy for each student.

in class

- 1 Choose a song that would be interesting for your students, of an appropriate level and in which the words are clear enough to hear. You can choose one that has several examples of a language point you would like to review (see below for some suggestions).
- 2 Hand out the lyrics, and ask students to fill in the missing words. Play the song so they can check that they have completed it correctly.
- 3 Depending on the length of the song and the number of students, divide the class into several groups and give each group one or two stanzas of the song to memorize. Give them five minutes or so to do this.
- 4 When all groups have memorized their part, play the song again and ask them to sing their part with the singer without looking at the lyrics.
- 5 Alternatively, without playing the song again after they have memorized their part, you can ask each group to say their part together, completing the whole song. For this, Cat Steven's *Father and Son* is useful as the song is a dialogue between two family members of different generations. Here you can divide the class in two groups and half the class speaks as the father and the other half as the son.
- 6 Ask students individually to write down five of the words that they memorized that they feel will be most useful for them and then compare with others in their group to see if they chose the same or different words.

Possible songs

Count on me (Bruno Mars) – First conditional

Hey Brother (Avicci) – First conditional, Interrogative sentences

Fernando (ABBA) – Past simple, Past continuous

4.10

Get physical!

Focus	Revision of the past simple and past participle of irregular verbs
Level	Beginners to Intermediate
Time	10-15 minutes
Preparation	Write on the board or prepare a slide of a list of irregular verbs in their infinitive form.

in class

- 1 Take one of the verbs at random and demonstrate: Bend down, touch your feet (or as far down as you can reach) and say the verb (e.g. *take*). Then place your hands on your hips and say (*took*). Finally, raise your hands above your head and say (*taken*).
- 2 Ask the students to do the same with you.
- 3 Now call on students at random and ask them to choose another verb from the ones on the board. They first demonstrate the movements, and then the whole class does it.
- 4 Continue until you've done this for all the verbs.
- 5 Next, invite the students to think up of a verb not on the list they would like to demonstrate.
- 6 Ask a couple of students to demonstrate their verb and have the whole class do it with them.
- 7 Then explain that you want them to think of a multi-word chunk incorporating one of the verbs from the list on the board (i.e. *Take a shower, Go to sleep, Write a letter*). If the students can't think of one, they can ask you or a classmate for help. When everyone seems ready, ask several or all the students demonstrate their chunk, using the movements for the three forms.

Note

Harvard University neurobiologist John J. Ratey says “exercise improves learning on three levels: first, it optimizes your mind-set to improve alertness, attention and motivation; second, it prepares and encourages nerve cells to bind to one another, which is the cellular basis for logging in new information; and third, it spurs the development of new nerve cells from stem cells in the hippocampus” (Ratey 2008: 53). He adds that German researchers found that people learn words 20 percent faster when they are asked to perform some sort of physical exercise prior to the task. (p. 45).

Acknowledgement

We learned steps 1 and 2 from Mario Rinvolutri.

5.2

Stories we tell

Focus	Revising lexical chunks
Level	Intermediate and above
Time	25-30 minutes
Preparation	Make a copy for each student of the story, with the chunks removed. Write on the board or prepare a slide of a list of the chunks in random order.

in class

- 1 Explain to students that stories often use formulaic chunks.
- 2 Make sure the students understand the chunks in the list.
- 3 Explain to the students that you will read them a story and pause each time there is a lexical chunk for them to write down which one they think it is.
- 4 Tell the story, pausing for each underlined chunk. (See sample story and chunks below.)
- 5 When you have finished telling the story, read the version with the chunks included for students to check their answers.
- 6 Ask students to work in pairs to re-tell the story. Student A will begin and Student B will listen but explain that every 20 seconds or so, you will clap and then they need to change. The Bs carry on from where the As left off. Encourage them to use the chunks in the right places.

Variation

After reviewing the chunks, give students a copy of the text without the chunks for them to complete. Then tell them the story with the chunks included for them to check their work.

Comment

The chunks could be fairly typical of the storytelling genre, e.g., *once upon a time*, *one fine day*, and *guess what happened next?* or more general e.g. *for a very long time*, *I hear what you're telling me* etc.

5.2

Stories we tell

A Zen Story

Once upon a time, there was a young fellow who wanted to learn about a martial arts system. He thought about it very seriously, and one fine day, he decided to approach a well-known master and asked him earnestly: 'Master, I'm devoted to your arts, I'm a keen student, and I want nothing more than to become a master myself. How long do you think it's going to take me?' The master replied calmly: 'I hear what you're telling me. I reckon it'll take you ten years, or something like that'. As soon as he heard those words, the young man looked confused, was visibly angry, and snapped back: 'Ten years? Did you just say ten years? I can't believe this! But maybe you didn't hear me right, so let me say this again: I'm hard-working, I promise you, I've been wanting to do this for a long time, I'm prepared to devote my entire life to this, so how long, tell me, how long till I become a master like you?' The old master wasn't shaken, looked down, pulled his white beard, then he slowly lifted his chin, looked the young disciple in the eye and, guess what he said? He said: 'In that case, son, I reckon it will take you *twenty years*'

5.2

Stories we tell

A Zen Story

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I can't believe this
my entire life
one fine day
I hear what you're telling me.
Once upon a time
I promise you
In that case
young fellow
Let me say this again
keen student
Guess what he said?
I want nothing more
Martial arts system
Something like that