

•Let's work together: co-operative learning in the primary classroom

We see lots of trends in education and ELT, but one that is definitely here to stay is co-operative learning. What is it and how can we integrate it into the primary classroom? In this session will explore this type of methodology and provide practical ideas and tips on how to get your learners working together.

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•Teaching Ideas

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Learning objective: To ask and answer common personal questions.

Level / Age group: 1st of Primary, 6-7 year-olds, adaptable.

Comments: This activity works great for a first day of class.

▪Work in class with **personal questions**: e.g. *What's your name? How old are you? What's your favourite colour?* Depending on your pupils' level, you can add more questions, such as *What's your favourite (wild) animal? What food do you love? What food do you hate? How are you feeling today?* Make sure that your pupils know how to answer to these questions.

- The **vocal mirror** (adapted from Ed Cousins @ Interacting).

1. Choose some of the questions from the previous exercise. Example:

*Hello
What's your name?
What's your favourite colour?
What's your favourite wild animal?
What food do you love?
How are you feeling today?
Bye bye!*

2. In pairs (St A, St B), pupils face each other. Make sure strong and weak pupils pair up. Read the questions, one by one, allowing the students to give an answer after each question (full sentences! eg. *My favourite colour is red*, not just *red*). Only St A can answer to each question and s/he can't say their answers out loud. They can only move their lips. St B will move his/her lips at the same time, trying to 1) understand what St A is saying and 2) Mirror/copy what St A is saying. Allow for a few seconds after each answer so that students can check that their



guesses were correct.

3. Pupils switch roles (St B answers, St A copies and guesses)

NB: This activity not only practices language (sentence structure and pronunciation) but makes pupils work together towards a common goal (students involve their partners when moving their lips, trying to make themselves understood). And it's fun!

This activity might be slow at the beginning, but with practice, SS will gradually increase pace. You can do the "vocal mirror" from time to time, with different language or vocabulary focus. With older students, they can just introduce each other, without you having to ask the questions.

- The speaking circle.** Now it's time for practising the questions in a normal conversation, with several partners. In a big circle, pupils use the previous questions-answers with one of their neighbours. Then, they turn to the other side to talk to a new person and explain what

they've learned about that 1st person. Finally, you can ask that 3rd person to report what



they've learned about that 1st person.

NB: Use a different language focus for higher levels, depending of what you've done in the previous tasks.

▪**Follow-up:** Students Skype other pupils from another class, another school, another country. After, in their groups, they explain who they've met.

NB: You can join eTwinning (<https://www.etwinning.net/>), a European Project through which your students can communicate, develop projects, share and, in other words, collaborate.

THE WALL OF FAME

Learning objective: To find, share and learn personal information about famous characters.

Level / Age group: 5th of Primary, 10-11 year-olds, adaptable.

Comments: You will need a mobile device and Internet connection. Previous knowledge: professions, nationalities, likes / dislikes, pets, etc.

▪**Agreement.** The pupils, in groups of four, decide on one famous person / character they all like. After, they state what they know about this person and add this info to the following worksheet.

My famous person / character

NB. Not all the info can be found in Wikipedia, especially if it's a fictional character, so pupils will have to spend some time / make some effort looking for the missing info. Sometimes, they won't be able to find all the details, so it's a good opportunity for creativity.

▪ **Complete the info.** Pupils complete the worksheet at home with the missing information and bring a printed picture of the selected person's face (in colour, high definition).

Example:



Children

Luke Skywalker

Zodiac sign, pets, hobbies

Zodiac sign: Gemini

Pets: stormtroopers

▪ **Introducing your character.** Pupils will use the previous info to answer the following question: *Imagine you have the opportunity to interview your famous person. What you do you think he / she would say?*

Example:

Hi, my name is DARTH Vader. I am from Tatooine. First, I was a Jedi but now I am a Sith Lord. My wife's name is Padmé and I've got 2 kids. I love modelling for geek T-shirts and I practise lightsaber fencing on the weekend.

▪ **Record it.** Pupils will create a video by replacing their own mouth and adding voice to their character with the following app: *Funny Movie Maker (iOS)* or *Face Fun (Android)*. In the



groups, they choose a speaker who will record the audio.

NB. Students can use their tablets or you can use your smartphone and record each group. See instructions at the end of this doc.



▪**Add Augmented Reality.** Add AR with this other app: Aurasma (iOS and Android).

NB1. Students use their tablets (or bring your smartphone). See instructions at the end of this doc.

NB2. You can also do this without technology. Students can create a mask of the famous person's face. One pupil in the group will wear it, role-playing the character and the other 3 people can ask questions.

▪**Learn about others.** With the help of your students, put all the pictures on the wall. Pupils will scan the pictures and learn about other famous characters. Individually, students choose a different famous person and scan the photographs on the wall. They fill out a new worksheet with the info they will gather about that new character. Then, students will tell their group what they have learned about



those new people.

NB. This is an “interaction-negotiation-exposition” activity through “meaningful communication”. All students become experts in one person and everybody is learning something from others. Besides, pupils will acquire better learning strategies because students have to teach it.

"Quiz. You can create a quiz about the different characters to check comprehension.

NB. You can also do this entire activity with other levels, adapting the complexity of the questions / information.

STAND UP FOR YOUR WORD

Learning objective: To review vocabulary (content words) in context.

Level / Age group: 2nd of Primary, 7-8 year-olds, adaptable.

Comments: you can do this activity as a pre-reading or post-reading task.

▪ **Vocabulary cards.** Select a story or a text. Give each group a card with a set of content words from that story / reading (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs).

NB. Make sure there's at least one student who can read the words. Instead, you can use flashcards.

▪ **Rehearsal.** In groups of four, pupils agree on how to represent their words.

1. Individually, students make sure they understand the words. If not, they can look them up in



their books / dictionaries.

2. They explain the meaning of words to each other, making sure they all agree on the meaning.

3. All of them agree on how to represent the words.

4. They practise (one pupil reads out the words, the others represent them; then they switch).

▪ **And action!** Read the text. Whenever a word from any of the cards is said, the group of pupils with that word in their cards will stand up and represent the word.

NB1. You can have one same word on different cards, so that different groups stand up. This is a nice way to see how creative students are, praise different ways of interpretation of the same word, etc.

NB2. All groups need to be attentive of what the others do (see next step "Act it out").

Rule: all members of a group have to stand up at the same time, so everybody needs to be paying attention. If just 1, 2, or 3 people stand up, then the word is not valid.

▪ **Role-Play (with gestures).** All groups can act out the whole story later, using the same gestures (that they've learned from watching each other). Before that, allow the groups some time to make sure they remember all the gestures and the meaning of words.

NB. With this last activity, 1) your students learn from each other and 2) you can assess your students (i.e. they have all understood the meaning of words).

With higher levels, they can learn some phrases and role-play the story as well as using the gestures.

HOW I MET YOUR PLAYMOBIL ©

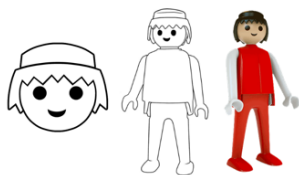
Learning objective: To explain a simple past experience (meeting someone).

Level / Age group: 6th of Primary, 11-12 year-olds, adaptable.

Comments: adapted from Amanda McLoughlin.

▪Previously in class...

Students have learned the past tense with time phrases (a year ago, last week) to describe a sequence of events (first, then, last). For homework, students will bring their favourite Playmobil © in the form of a



toy, a mask or a printed picture.

▪**Who are they?** Individually, pupils imagine who these toys are, what they do, how old they are, what they like doing, what they hate, what they eat... *Do they have a pet? Do they have*

any brothers or sisters?

▪ **Describe.** In pairs, with their toy / tag / mask, pupils describe their Playmobil ©.

NB1. For lower levels, pupils use “I” instead of “he/she”.

NB2. For higher levels, introduce more elaborated vocabulary that your students will have to include to describe the characters, e.g. my Playmobil © is *naughty*, *careless*, *talented*, etc.

▪ **Do I know you?** In pairs, pupils imagine these two people actually know each other. *How did they meet? When? Where? What do they like doing together?*

▪ **Group of friends.** In groups of four (2 pairs, with their masks / toys, etc.): They introduce each other, and imagine they already know each other: *How did they meet? What’s their relationship (neighbours, family, classmates, etc)? What do they hate / like doing together?*

▪ **Write up your story.** Back in pairs, students reproduce the story of “How I met your Playmobil” and write it on a piece of paper. Then, they exchange papers with the other pair and correct the mistakes. As an alternative, students act it out.

NB. Higher level students: Give them cards with objects to include in the conversation / story. For instance, students get a card with the noun “pen” so they will have to sneak that word in their story.

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• Apps

SETTING UP FUNNY MOVIE MAKER (iOs)

- ✓ Save the image you want to use in your “Gallery”.
- ✓ Click on “New Face”, then “My Photos” and select your image.
- ✓ Click on the “scissors” icon and drag the blue circle. It has to fit the image’s mouth (resize it).

- ✓Click “ok” (“tick” button) and hold your device, until your mouth is lined up.
- ✓Press the red button and start recording (30 seconds).
- ✓Click on the red button again to stop the recording. You can play it again and if you like it, click on the arrow (at the bottom) to share the link.

Video tutorial: <http://tinyurl.com/gtj4sl2>

SETTING UP AURASMA (iOS & Android)

- ✓Print out the selected image.
- ✓Open the app and register.
- ✓To create a new aura, tap +.
- ✓Take a photo of the image.
- ✓To create an overlay, tap “Device” and choose the video that you had recorded before with the Funny Face app.
- ✓Click “Select” and make sure the video fits the image.
- ✓Click “next” and name your Aura. Make it public in order to share it. Then click “submit”.
- ✓Focus your tablet on the chosen picture, wait until the video pops up.
- ✓Click on the arrow to share your Aura.

NB. Apps are continuously updated so the previous instructions may be subject to slight change.

•References

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- " **Coursebooks:** Poptropica and Islands (Pearson)
- " Ideas for **group games:** <http://tinyurl.com/z7jcj6>
- " Ideas for **group dynamics:** <http://tinyurl.com/jcs4mhl>
- " Images: iStock and Google Images