

TESOLSPAIN REGIONAL EVENT – 27th OCTOBER, MERIDA

Teaching Teenagers: The Challenge and the Reward

For the 5th year running, we made the short trip to Merida for the TESOLSpain Regional Event. This year the focus was on teenagers and the word “challenge” conjures up all sorts of mental images, some akin to Chuckie, for some on our teaching team. First up was **Elizabeth Beer** on **Teaching Teenagers**. Elizabeth gave some solid advice with first classes, polishing the coursebook as well as re-visiting old favourites such as: using transcripts or writing extreme sentences and cool presentations using Powtoons and PechaKucha. A great talk which really did have something for everyone. My favourite activity, and one that has this week made correcting FCE and CAE exam tasks actually fun, was using chop sticks to pick up the correct answer. Next up came **Amy Kelly, Tips and Ideas for Teaching Writing**. One of our teachers had a huge grin on her face when Amy showed some creative ideas on using Excel for teen-centred surveys, something that the teacher had actually started doing, while another member of our team gave me her “See, I already do that with writing journals!” -look, when Amy spoke of her success with using writing booklets for exam classes. As always, the best ideas are often simple and we agreed that using the wheel of fortune or fruit machines, from on-line class tools, is a cunning way of motivating students to write essays. Our final speaker was **Chris Rowland** with his presentation, **Are You Not Entertained?** The talk was, for us, a fun eclectic mix of activities, whose objective was to get students involved in the learning process while tapping into their innate creativity and sense of fun. Chris revisited some old favourites like writing questions on a piece of chalk, building up a questions curricula and passing on the slime. He also introduced us to inter-level presentations and getting teens to teach primary classes. Our conversation on the drive back to Badajoz was a lively one with both veteran teachers and freshers alike, really wanting to get stuck in and experiment with some of the wonderful ideas that they had picked up that morning.

A huge thanks to Caroline Allen and the Centro de Profesores de Merida for organising such a memorable event with some entertaining speakers and delicious churros and magdalenas (Merida thankfully doesn't do muffins!) in the coffee break. Team Merida, you have set the bar very high indeed for next year!

Ian Deans

Director

Deans Creative English School