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“Turn the Tortilla over in the Classroom”

Abstract: *EFL teachers often face situations where students bring new and unfamiliar to others contents in the classroom, which may impede both natural communication and the process of instruction. However, this could also be turned into an asset, when approaching teaching in a more creative way. By giving students the chance to make decisions about their learning and engaging them in student-centred activities, they will develop a range of soft and employability skills in addition to language skills.*

Biodata: *Violeta Stefanovska is the Academic Coordinator at Trinity College London for Spain & Portugal. She has been active in the world of ELT for over twenty years. She has worked as a teacher and trainer. Her interests include teaching exam classes, learner autonomy and teacher friendly teaching. She holds an MA in Applied Linguistics and the Trinity TESOL Licentiate Diploma.*

Classroom challenges

- "Low motivation / student participation
- "Students not focusing on the main aim/skill for this lesson
- "Students including new and unfamiliar to others topics
- "Students speaking, but not communicating
- "Preparing a variety of speaking tasks can be time-consuming
- "Please, add.

Exam challenges

- "Reciting memorized texts
- "Predicting questions instead of listening to the question
- "Not answering the questions
- "Not asking questions
- "Not showing interest in what the interlocutor is saying
- "Lack of eye contact
- "Speaking skills vs communicative skills

Activity 1:

Prompt: *"I wish I had known that the route of my bus had been changed. I wouldn't have missed the opportunity I have dreamt about for ages."*

Activity 2:

Creating background stories

*"I wish I had known that the **route of my bus** had been **changed**. I wouldn't have missed the **opportunity** I have dreamt about for ages."*

- What was the route / what is it now?
- What has changed? Is it longer or shorter? Is it the organisation of the bus stops that has changed?
- What was the opportunity? Is it related to your career? Is it personal? Is it a new interest or hobby?

Activity 3:

Presentation task

"Get the student briefly explain what it is about and why he/she is so interested

"Get students to work in groups of 4 and decide on a more specific topic they are all interested in/want to know more about

"Students may do research for homework and complete one of the prompts on the form each

"Students give a short presentation

"Students answer questions from audience

"Students give feedback to each other

"Get students to do group presentations as well

Activity 4:

Post-it communication

"When students don't feel like speaking (yet)

"Put a prompt on a post-it on the wall/a poster/a desk and blank post-its next to it.

"Invite students to reply to you or to other students' comments.

"You can use the comments in this class by getting students read out loud the dialogues and / or improvise more detailed conversations.

"You can use the comments in future lessons as prompts.

Adjusting the task to current needs & time management

"5 min: Prompt + Student Talk Time

"10 mins: P + STT + Report back

"15 mins: P + STT + RB + Feedback

"20 mins: P + STT + RB + FBK + Needs analysis

"25-30 mins: P + STT + RB + FBK + NA + Background story

"Students to prepare prompts for a future lesson

Taking it a step further and working towards integrating more skills

"Students can be encouraged to use input from other subjects

"Students can reuse texts they have previously used for reading/listening comprehension

"Teacher to show interest in students' ideas, hobbies and interests

"Teacher to encourage students to improve presentation skills and note taking as sub-skills

What communication sub-skills we expect to improve

- Rephrasing
- Active listening
- Data processing
- Note taking
- Summarizing

What soft skills we expect to develop

- Self confidence
- Turn taking
- Eye contact
- Adaptability
- Networking
- Empathy

What employability skills we expect to develop

- Interpersonal skills
- Communication skills
- Critical thinking skills

- Personal development
- Presentation skills
- Leadership
- Number skills
- IT skills