

**T. C.
SELÇUK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ ANA BİLİM DALI
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**TEACHING TO MIXED ABILITY CLASSES AND VARIOUS
APPLICATIONS USED IN 6TH GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
EFL STUDENTS**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

**DANIŞMAN
DOÇ. DR. HASAN ÇAKIR**

**HAZIRLAYAN
AHMET EROL**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the problems and their solutions in mixed ability classes . When we consider the individuals in each class we can see so many kinds of learners and different learning levels. As teachers we sometimes cannot find suitable pace in our classes due to these differences. Some students may be quite interested and some may not be so. Or some can acquire the language in very short time whereas some cannot.

In particular, the situation in elementary schools in Turkey is completely mixed. The number of each class and world knowledge of each student make the teacher's job difficult. When a teacher knows how to deal with such kinds of differences and pupils in different situations ,definitely the result of guiding and leading in language learning could be much better and productive.

Within twelve years I worked as a teacher of English abroad, especially in years between 1998 and 2004 in which I worked as The Head of English Department and teacher trainer, I had chance to work many different students and teachers. There I learnt so much about mixed ability classes and how to deal with different learners. I tried to collect and share some of the valuable ways and techniques of teaching .

In this study I tried to mention the problems and their solutions. The applications and activities which are mentioned in this thesis can be regarded as the solutions to the problems in mixed ability classes.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı içerisinde bir çok öğrenme seviyesi, öğrenme çeşidi ve farklı altyapılı öğrencileri içeren sınıflarda İngilizce öğretiminde karşılaşılan ve bir çok İngilizce öğretmenin öğretim süreçlerinde yaşadıkları problemlere pratik çözümler önermektir.

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı bünyesinde faaliyet gösteren ilköğretim okulları incelendiğinde yukarıda bahsedilen durumların, öğrenci farklılıklarının bütün okullarda var olduğu görülmektedir. Öğrencilerin bir kısmı derse oldukça ilgiliyken diğer bir kısmı yeterli ilgiyi gösterememekte veya bir kısmı dil edinimlerini çok kısa bir sürede yaparken diğerleri ise daha yavaş ilerlemektedirler.

Yurtdışında çalıştığım on iki yıl süresince , özellikle 1998 ile 2004 yılları arasında Zümre Başkanı ve Teacher Trainer görev yaptım, çok değişik farklılıklara sahip öğrenci ve öğretmenlerle çalışma imkanım oldu. Bu süre zarfında öğretmenlerden gelen, onların öğretim süreçlerinde karşılaştıkları, problemlere onlarla birlikte çözümler bulmaya çalıştım. Bu problemler genel itibariyle “Mixed Ability”den kaynaklanan problemlerdi. Bu süreçte edindiğim çözümler ve teknikleri bu çalışmamda bir araya getirmeye çalıştım.

Sonuç olarak öğretim yaptığı sınıfı tanıyan ve farklılıkları göz önünde bulundurarak değişik uygulamaları sınıfa taşıyabilen öğretmenlerin dil öğretiminde başarıya daha yakın oldukları görülecektir.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mixed ability classes are a fact of not only language classes but of all courses. Because all two students cannot be the same in terms of language background, learning speed, learning ability and motivation, it is a utopian view to think that our classes could be homogeneous in terms of these aspects; no matter where we live in the world or at which school we teach. Therefore, the language teachers should be aware of the problems of mixed ability classes and their solutions to identify the source of troubles in their classes and to cure them.

In a sense, the classes in Turkey in elementary schools and in secondary schools can be said to be mixed ability. It's because in every class there are individuals and each of those individuals is different from each other in terms of knowledge and ability. The term mixed ability is normally used for a group where these individual differences are very clear and especially where there is a marked difference in language level.

To be more clear, mixed ability refers to classes where there is a very clear difference in language level among the students. This difference among students in 6th grades in Cemile Erkunt Elementary School is quite distinctive. There are students who already learned a bit of English and ones they didn't have chance to follow the English classes with teachers of English.

Secondly it refers to the classes in which there are clear differences in learning styles, speed and aptitude among students. Some students seem to be good at language learning or perhaps good at all subjects and able to pick things up quickly and remember them quickly while others are a bit slower, lack of skills and generally experience more difficulties in learning.

We can also recognize that the students' background knowledge, the knowledge of the world and their skills and talents in other areas are very different. Some of these differences may be related with age, sex, different level of maturity, different interests and so on.

The mixed ability also refers to classes where there are different levels of motivation. Some students have very positive attitudes towards learning English, while others see it as just another school subject.

1.1 Background of The Study

The differences which cause problems in heterogeneous classes are in language learning ability, language knowledge, cultural background, learning style, attitude towards language, mother tongue, intelligence, world knowledge, learning experience, knowledge of other languages, age,

gender, personality, confidence, motivation, interests, and/or educational level (Ur 1996, 304). However, these variations may occur in different degrees in different classes. Thus, if the teacher wants to ensure that all students perform to their maximum potential, the teacher must identify these problems and deal with them accordingly.

In the middle of 1930's, some schools in the United Kingdom decided to divide students according to their IQ tests. However, it was seen that the new groups still had variations among students, and it is not feasible to change these groups and the curricula every time (Kelly 1979). Furthermore, Prodromou (1989, 2) indicates that even when students are grouped according to their test scores, their progress rates will always be at different levels due to the teaching methods, materials and/or learning style differences. Hence, the teachers become the key factor in reaching each and every student in a class. It is important for teachers to be aware of the problems resulting from mixed abilities in their classes and to decide on techniques and strategies that could be used to solve such problems.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

Some students seem naturally enthusiastic about learning, but many need or expect their instructors to inspire, challenge, and stimulate them: "Effective learning in the classroom depends on the teacher's ability ... to maintain the interest that brought students to the course in the first place" (Ericksen, 1978).

In state schools as teachers we have no chance to classify our students in terms of their level of intelligence or aptitude to language learning. It means in each class teachers not only have students with different world knowledge or different educational background but also with different economic situation which really helps students reach many books and learning materials and different aptitude to learning.

Considering all these points, teachers should pace their teaching carefully to improve or to help students acquire the language. And it definitely means we should know much about dealing with mixed ability classes.

1.3 Goal And Scope of The Study

Some of the teachers who work at state schools are not truly aware of the classes they have. And some have serious problems in their teachings. In this study we aimed to help and show them or remind them some techniques and methods that can be applied in the classes. Teachers are not or shouldn't be hopeless, but should be in search of how to deal with these differences and make them useful for their teachings.

Moreover by learning and applying the techniques we can also help students improve themselves in other subjects. They learn and identify their significances and after each lesson which was organized for the mixed ability they feel themselves happier and more progressed.

1.4 Research Questions

In the introduction, we described the term 'mixed ability' as referring to a variety of types of differences among our learners. We will see that there is not one easy answer to the question “*How should I deal with my mixed-ability group?*” This is what will be covered in this thesis.

Many teacher trainers or experienced teachers are asked about the problems of the young teachers during their study and maybe they offered different solutions to their colleagues.

In this thesis I will try to find out some useful solutions to given questions which were asked to me while I was working as the Head of the Department and Teacher Trainer.

One of the problem or question was “Half of the students have finished an exercise when the other half have only just begun”. This was the most common one.

Another question was “The stronger students get bored if I spend time explaining to the weaker ones” or “We’ve got a syllabus to get through but most of the students are already behind”. Some teachers also complain that the stronger students dominate the pace of the lesson.

In most of the classes the weaker students sit at the back and start disrupting the lesson. Or they don’t even try to participate in the lesson. Sometimes they try so hard but they still get bad marks and those weaker students are always asking their teachers things in their own language and want everything explained in it.

When teachers are doing pair work or group work they don’t know whether it’s better to put strong and weak students together or to put students of the same level in the groups.

Some teachers also may not know where to pitch their lesson or they may not know how to start correcting students’ written homework which are absolute disaster in terms of grammar spelling or everything.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Though we mentioned so many useful techniques and methods which can be used in mixed ability classes, unfortunately because of the number of the students in each classes in Turkey and impossibility of the changing the classroom layouts we may not apply some of the techniques.

Another limitation is that we don’t have a very flexible English syllabus and teachers may have some administrative difficulties while trying different activities. But having a good rapport with the directors and the parents may solve this problem to some extend.

CHAPTER 2

2. WHAT PROBLEMS DO MIXED ABILITY CLASSES PRESENT FOR THE TEACHERS?

Teaching to a mixed ability class brings some problems and difficulties to the teachers. Sometimes half of the students may finish an exercise when the other half have just begun. It's a very common problem in state schools. Stronger students may get bored if the teacher spends time explaining to the weaker ones. In state schools a particular syllabus should be followed but most of the students are already behind. Sometimes the stronger students dominate. And the teacher mostly adapts the pace according to the stronger ones. The weaker students sit at the back and start disrupting the lesson. Even the weaker students don't try. And they feel disappointed. Sometimes teachers may not know where to pitch their lesson. Most of the students, especially the weaker ones keep asking the teacher things in their own language and want their teacher to explain in mother tongue. This problem is one of the most severe one at the school I work. Some of the weaker students try so hard but they still get bad marks. Doing pair work or group work is very difficult. Teachers are hesitant whether to put strong and weak students together or put students of the same level in the groups. Most of the time students' written homework is an absolute disaster and the teachers may not know where to start correcting.

Some ideas about why some people are better or more successful language learners than others and therefore why the problem of mixed ability classes exists are as follow:

- Students come from different learning backgrounds. Some may have studied more English at primary level than others. This situation is very rare. Some may have attended private language schools for extra English. So they may have spent different amounts of time studying. Even they may have spent same amount of time studying, they may have used different coursebooks which covered different ground, or had teachers who emphasized different skills or language areas in their teaching.
- Students progress at different rates. This is likely to affect classes of students who have already studied some English. It is due to different learning styles and the way students respond to the teacher's style and approach. Some learners may be primarily VISUAL, which means, for example, that they like to see things written down. Others are primarily AUDITORY, which means they learn best and remember things best through listening. Others are KINESTHETIC which means they like to learn through doing. If the teacher's

approaches tended to emphasize the visual element, then it is likely that the primarily visual learners will have progressed at a faster rate.

Some students find learning a second language easy and some find it difficult. What exactly constitutes 'learning aptitude' or 'a gift for languages' is not clear but it probably includes things like the ability to perceive and recognize new sounds, establish sound-symbol relationships, recognize patterns in language forms and infer rules, notice similarities and differences in meanings and language forms, memorize and recall new verbal information.

Some students may find formal study easier than others. These students will have adopted good study habits and appropriate learning strategies in all subjects at school. They pay attention and participate in class, they ask questions if they do not understand, they keep neat notebooks and they do their homework conscientiously. Other students do none of these things and seem to make little progress in their learning. There may also be students who experience learning difficulties due to dyslexia, hearing or sight problems.

Students may already have a positive or negative attitude. If students have already started studying English, they may have developed a positive or negative attitude towards the language or towards themselves as learners. This may largely depend on how successful they have been or how they have been treated. For example, if they enjoyed the classes, got on well with the other students and had an encouraging teacher, they are likely to have a fairly positive attitude. On the other hand, if they found the classes boring, didn't like the other students and had a teacher who constantly criticized and corrected, they are likely to have developed a negative attitude!

There may be other influences. Things other than the students' classroom experiences may have influenced their attitude and ability, such as English-speaking family which is very rare, in fact there wasn't any student in the school where I worked, traveled to English-speaking countries, satellite TV, CD-ROM or computers with English programmes at home, personal interests such as a love of English or American pop music, an English-speaking pen friend or a future ambition for a job that involves English.

2.1 Classroom Management

Good classroom management skills are absolutely essential in the mixed-ability class since organising and running our classrooms efficiently and effectively will maximise opportunities for all students to learn.

It is strongly suggested to involve all the students. It's very easy to let the strong and extrovert students dominate. Teachers should make a conscious effort to allow quieter and weaker students

the opportunity to participate by using some techniques such as establishing eye contact, not allowing weaker students to hide at the back, nominating weaker students to answer easier questions, checking they have understood instructions or monitoring during pair and groupwork.

This will help to make students feel recognised as individuals and make them feel more involved. There are many activities to help you to get to know names when you meet a new class. Here are two ideas:

Alphabetical order

Tell the students they have to organise themselves either by standing in a line or sitting at their desks in alphabetical order, according to their first names.

Give them an example: write some names on the board and ask which should be first, second and so on. Elicit from them what question they will have to ask their classmates: What's *your name*? and drill it if necessary. Tell them where the first student should sit or stand and where the last student should be. Then the students stand up, find out their classmates' names and sit *or* stand in the right place. When they are settled, go round the class in order, getting them to say their names out loud so that everyone can check if the order is correct

Throw the ball

- * Hold the ball up and say your name, pointing at yourself
- * Then throw it to a student and ask the student to say his or her name.
- * Make another student throw the ball to another one

This continues until all the students have said their names, then they throw the ball again but saying the recipient's name first.

Characteristics often attributed, to good teachers are: bright, cheerful and friendly organized, fair, confident, authoritative, (but not authoritarian) enthusiastic, encouraging.

Many people claim that the teacher was a key influence on their liking of and their success in different subjects at school. It may have been one of the factors that you identified as important in your own learning of English in the introduction. It is worth reflecting on the impression you create as a teacher and trying to cultivate the above qualities.

Students need to feel noticed but also valued. Recognising good behaviour, effort and good work is important. Say *good* and *well done*, smile and nod to express approval in class. In responding to written work, don't just focus on the errors but comment on what is good. With behaviour in class, reward what is good rather than punish what is bad. For example, if students are working in groups and there is just one group chatting or not doing what they should, it is better to draw attention to and comment positively on those groups who are working well rather than the one that is not. Negative feedback is very powerful and can lead to a negative class atmosphere.

Whenever you identify a student's weakness, make it clear that your comments relate to a particular task or performance, not to the student as a person. Try to cushion negative comments with a compliment about aspects of the task in which the student succeeded. (Cashin, 1979)

As a teacher, you need to use your voice a lot and how you do this is important. Everybody needs to be able to hear you, otherwise students sitting at the back of the class will stop paying attention. To maintain interest, you also need to vary your voice in terms of tone and pitch. Students also need to be able to recognise signals you use for, e.g. finishing activities and calling their attention. This can be done effectively by simple marker expressions, such as *OK*, *everybody* and varying the pitch.

Another aspect of teacher talk is grading and relevance. Many teachers have a tendency to talk too much. Teacher talk is fine as long as it is meaningful and comprehensible if it is in English, it provides useful exposure for the students. Long, overcomplicated and boring explanations of, e.g. a grammar point are not useful and will alienate weaker or unmotivated students in particular. Keeping your language simple and pausing often allow students some thinking time.

2.2 Managing Learning Activities

Good management of learning activities ensures that all students, however weak or strong, are involved in the lesson.

Focus on instructions

- Plan your instructions in advance; decide exactly what you need to tell the students and how you will say it. Keep the language as simple as possible and the instructions as short as possible.
- Make sure you have everyone's attention before giving the instructions.
- Make sure you look at the students as you give instructions; use the board to give examples, hold up the handout and point at it, demonstrate the activity with one of the stronger students if it helps.
- Use gestures to support what you are saying. For example, if the students have to close their books, you can demonstrate this, or if they must not show their worksheet to their partner, demonstrate this by holding it close to you with an arm round it.
- Pause as you give instructions; if the students look confused, try repeating or paraphrasing what you have just said.
- Check your instructions by asking check questions, e.g. *What do you do first? Then?* or by getting the students to repeat the instructions in their own words.

Alternatively, give each student one of eight names (strawberry, orange, mango, etc. or lions, eagles, tigers, etc.) or numbers (1 to 8) and then tell them to get together with the students with the same name or number.

It is also strongly advised to set a time limit for the activity before the students begin and keep to the time you have set and warn students about two minutes before the end, e.g. *You have two more minutes, then you must stop*. Students should be given a clear signal that everyone is to stop even if they have not quite finished: *OK, everybody, now stop*.

The teacher should monitor while the students are working. This means going round helping or noting problem areas and answering students' questions, trying to see as many groups as possible and going to those students who are likely to have more difficulty first to ensure they have started on the right track. Monitoring also enables the teacher to know when to stop the activity. Students are likely to finish at different times. It depends on the activity (if it is absolutely necessary that everybody finishes this one before beginning the next) but in many cases it is probably best to stop it when most, rather than all, the students have finished.

The teacher should also bear in mind that everyone benefits from feedback. If a whole-class feedback stage is necessary, check that everyone has heard and understood the answers and has corrected their work. Self-checking against a key or checking in mixed-level pairs or groups may be more useful. When the teacher monitors, he/she focuses on those students who experienced most difficulty during the task.

It is essential that all the students can see and read what you write on the board, whether it is vocabulary, prompts for an activity or a record of the lesson. If some of them can't, they will either not bother to copy, copy wrongly or not do the activity. It is likely to be the weaker students who have more difficulty if the boardwork is unclear and they will get left behind again. The techniques and ideas are based on (<http://www.britishcouncil.org/languageassistant-pair-group-work.htm> 2007)

2.4 Using the Board

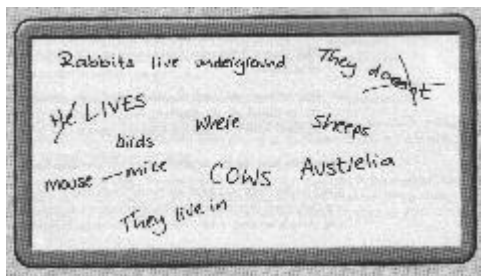
When using the board the teacher should check it is clear and legible and the writing on the board is big enough to be seen from the back of the class. It is also advised stand at the back of the class occasionally to check.

The board should be organised clearly. It is a good idea to keep a column on one side of the board for items of vocabulary that come up in class. Planning one's main boardwork is essential since this will provide a record of the lesson for the students.

Giving clear instructions really help students learn what to do with the things written on the board. The teacher is advised to check whether the students copy what is written or just read it.

If they are copying the things on the board, enough time should be given to do so. And the teacher should go round and monitor, paying particular attention to the weaker students or the careless copiers.

I observed that some students do not check what they have written in their notebooks so they should be encouraged to check their work. They can also check their partner's work.



Here are given two different boards. When we check them we can say:

Problems with first board

It's a mixture of capitals and lower case.

Some words are illegible.

There are some spelling mistakes.

The sentences are incomplete.

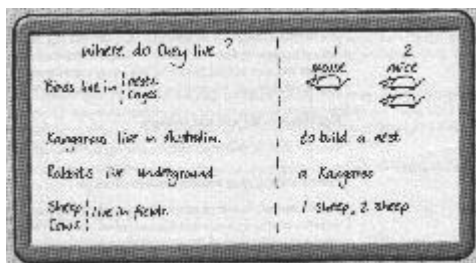
There's no topic heading.

There's no indication of parts of speech. It's disorganised and messy.

Better on second board

The board is organised, with a separate column for vocabulary.

The sentences/phrases are complete and students can see the



parts of speech. The handwriting is clear. Lots of help with grammar is given.(Dobbs, 2001)

2.5 Classroom Layout

The way that the classroom is organised and the use that both you and your students make of the space available has a powerful influence on classroom dynamics and learning potential. If your classroom is badly laid out and neither you nor the students ever move, some students will soon stop paying attention. The problems of the mixed-ability class will be made worse. There are various layouts possible in large classes. (Figure 1 and 2)

Depending on the activity you are doing, some layouts may be better than others. However, it is not often practical or possible to move the furniture every time you change activity. So you need to choose which layout suits you best. If other colleagues use the same room, any changes would have to be done in consultation with them.

If you really cannot move the desks because of school regulations or other teachers, and you are not happy with the layout, then remember that moving chairs, students and yourself is much easier and may solve the problems.

Remember that with a mixed-ability class, it is particularly important:

- ... to ensure that everyone can see you and be seen
- ... to vary interaction (whole class, individual, pairs, groups)
- ... for you to move around to monitor at appropriate times
- ... for the students to move around, to work in different groupings for different activities and to do some activities on their feet.

CHAPTER 3

3. MOTIVATING STUDENTS

There is no single magical formula for motivating students. Many factors affect a given student's motivation to work and to learn (Bligh, 1971; Sass, 1989): interest in the subject matter, perception of its usefulness, general desire to achieve, self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as patience and persistence. And, of course, not all students are motivated by the same values, needs, desires, or wants. Some of your students will be motivated by the approval of others, some by overcoming challenges.

Motivation is an essential factor affecting learning. In a mixed-ability class, the weaker learners are often those with least motivation. Their motivation is often reduced further by the sense of failure as they find the subject difficult and make little progress. Successful learners, on the other hand, are often those who are more motivated from the beginning and their sense of success further motivates them. It is therefore very important that in a mixed-ability class the teacher works on motivating all the students.

For many children, the main reason for studying English is that it is part of the school syllabus. This is not very motivating as a reason in itself. Some students, those with English-speaking relatives, for example, may have more positive reasons for learning. It is up to the teacher then to try to motivate his/her students, to show them that English is not 'just another school subject' and also to show them that it is interesting and relevant to them. It should also be remembered that **enjoyment** can be a powerful motivator.

3.1 How Useful Is English?

Raising students' awareness of just how much English there is around them, how many people speak English, and how much English they have already met can increase motivation. These activities can be done just as well by weaker students as by stronger ones but are best done in mixed-level groups.

I. Proper names

The students list names of:

... bands or singers they like who sing in English

... famous English-speaking people (sportsmen, politicians, writers, film stars, etc.)

... films and TV programmes they have seen.

II Countries

The students find out which countries have English as a first language. Alternatively, provide a map with the countries marked on and get the students to name them.

III. English around me

The students bring in any examples of English texts they can find, e.g. food wrappers, names of shops or films, titles or words of pop songs, instructions on domestic appliances. They make a wall poster or make a page in their own files or notebooks. This can be added to as the students find more examples.

3.1.1 English and my language

The students brainstorm all the words they already know which are used in both their language and in English, e.g. *stop, hotel, taxi, cafe, bar, pizza, TV, radio*.

Provide picture prompts to help the students. Again this **can be** made into a wall poster or a page in the students' own notebooks. (Figure 3)

3.1.2 Words I already know

As an extension or alternative to the above activity the students can brainstorm all the English words they already know, e.g. *film, hard rock, bank, TV*.

VI. English and jobs

Get the students to put a list of jobs in order of how important English is to each one. Get them to compare and justify their ideas in groups. The students can do this in L1 but using the English names for the jobs, e.g.

footballer	politician	computer programmer	flight attendant	shopkeeper	pop singer
English teacher	businessman	secretary	hotel manager	doctor	

The students can then say which jobs they would most/least like to do and why.

Survey

The students interview some adults (e.g. parents, other teachers, friends of the family, etc.) about their jobs and if they use English or not. This can be done in L1, of course. The questions they ask are: *What is your job? Do you use English at all? Do you think English can be useful in your professional area?*

Then they report back to the class about their findings. Many adults will - hopefully! — say that English is or would be useful to them so this may make less motivated students more aware of the 'real life' advantages of the language.

3.1.3 Creating An English Environment

If it is possible in your school, try to create an English classroom. If this is not possible, then an English noticeboard with changing displays could be set up somewhere in the school. Posters of Britain or other English-speaking countries, posters the students make/displays of their work, pictures of famous English-speaking people with speech bubbles the students have made or English cartoons/signs can help in creating a visually interesting and motivating environment.

3.1.4 Creating A Good Atmosphere

Each week a different class can be responsible for organising the display. A corner with English books, comics, magazines and games is also a good idea if you have the space, or you could have a portable box of these things which can be used at the beginning and end of lessons and for fast finishers.

A good classroom atmosphere is important in terms of motivation and morale. It is very important with a mixed-ability class that the teacher encourages an atmosphere of co-operation, tolerance and mutual support. If students feel comfortable in a group they will be more open to learning and may develop a more positive attitude towards the language they are studying.

3.1.5 Making a class contract which everyone signs

There are different ways of doing this but it is best if the 'rules' come primarily from the students themselves rather than from you. Here is a suggested procedure for students who have not done a class contract before.

Show the students signs which express rules. Get them in pairs or small groups to identify what they mean and where they might see them. If the students are beginners they can do this in L1, but it is a useful opportunity for you to feed in some vocabulary at the feedback stage. (Figure 4)

The rules should be studied with students why they exist and which they think are good or bad ones. In addition to these rules same thing could be applied to the school rules.

Students are told to think about their English class and brainstorm rules they think are a good idea.

Such as:

Students should try to speak English whenever they can.

The teacher should be patient with the students when they make mistakes.

Students should show rules to each other.

The teacher should make his/her lessons interesting.

Let them work in groups, perhaps making up five rules for the teacher and five for the students. Then as a whole class, elicit their ideas and get the class to agree on the best rules; if it is necessary, you can have some influence here to make sure things you think are important are included!

Once the contract is agreed and written up, it should be signed by everyone.

A class contract can help foster a sense of class identity, a sense of 'justice' and a clear reference point when rules are broken.(Puchta, Schratz ; 1993)

3.1.6 Be fair and don't discriminate

Even if there are students you prefer, you should never show this. Children and teenagers have a very strong sense of what is and is not fair and will easily identify instances of favouritism or discrimination. Teachers should show an equal amount of interest to all students, e.g. by spreading attention, learning and using names, individual counseling and so on.

3.1.7 Provide opportunities for learners to get to know each other

Personalisation activities are important here, i.e. practice activities which enable students to use English to talk or write about themselves. Also, by changing seating arrangements and groupings you can discourage the formation of fixed groups or cliques, though you will almost certainly find that some groupings work better than others in the end. It is essential in a mixed-ability group that you encourage tolerance and co-operation. You should immediately condemn any behaviour such as laughing at the weaker students, referring back to the class contract if necessary. Encouraging and training students to listen to each other are great help in learning a language and correcting mistakes.

If one student is giving the teacher an answer to a question, the teacher should encourage the others to listen by asking them if they agree afterwards.

Making students aware of active listening strategies is also very helpful. Tell one student (A) to talk for one minute on a chosen subject (in L1 if necessary). Give a secret instruction to their partner (B) to show no interest at all. Afterwards ask A to say what B did (yawned, drummed their fingers, looked around the room, etc.) and how A felt. Elicit how we show interest when we are listening by eye contact, making noises (e.g. *mmm, really*), facial expressions, etc. Then get students to practise listening and showing interest.

If one student or a group of students is giving a presentation to the class, make sure you set a task for the listeners so that they have a reason to listen. This might be as simple as thinking of two questions to ask at the end.

- The students produce a poster about important events in the lives of the class members, e.g.

1994 Most of us were born
1969 Our English teacher was born
2006 Our maths teacher had a baby

The students produce a fact sheet about the class. Copy and cut up the following table to give one question to each student/pair. All the students/pairs ask everyone the same question and keep a note of the answer. They can then produce a list of facts about the class. With a large class students can work in groups, each student asking two or three questions. When all the students have questioned members of their group, they get together with other students who asked the same question to their groups and add their results together. They then write a sentence onto a large card or a poster, e.g. Figure 5

This activity can be applied to different levels by choosing carefully the structures you use.

Students can do class surveys, about, e.g. likes and dislikes, eating habits, pets, holidays. With the information they gather they then produce a graph, table or pie chart, or write up an article based on the information gathered. While doing all these mentioned activities, do not compare students' performances

Competition in games and quizzes can be motivating but you should never encourage a sense of competition in grades. This may motivate stronger students who are competing for top position but will probably demotivate everyone else

3.2 The Lesson

Even if the students don't have any particular external motivation for learning English, the fact of enjoying the lessons themselves can provide powerful motivation. As teachers we can make the lessons interesting in terms of content and topic and find out what topics students are interested in outside the classroom. We can also include plenty of variety in terms of activity, e.g. don't always use the coursebook, and ensure that the pace of your lesson is balanced. Another way is that we should balance 'serious' activities with more 'fun' ones: too many games are as bad as too many dull exercises in the classroom. Laughter is important but so are concentration and quieter times.

Teacher should vary the emphasis from ACCURACY to FLUENCY: if they do some accuracy work, they should use the rest of the lesson or the next lesson for some fluency work, and provide a

balance of skills work: use reading, listening, speaking and writing activities in more or less equal amounts.

Another point is that they should vary the way they do things and the tasks students do, i.e. shouldn't always follow the same procedure when presenting grammar or doing a reading comprehension.

Also teachers should be sensitive to the students' moods and be flexible to avoid being boring: this may mean adapting something they have planned if it is not working, cater for different learning styles and preferences, include specific activities that cater for mixed levels and introduce student choice when possible, e.g. in terms of choosing projects, readers, or the order in which teachers tackle the activities in the coursebook.

Introducing opportunities for creativity and things which appeal to children's or teenagers' imaginations, e.g. rather than using dull, faceless, coursebook characters to introduce family vocabulary and using one of your own creation are also important. Things which are funny, strange or moving in some other way will be more memorable than things which are everyday and ordinary. Many of the points mentioned above mean that teachers will have to use the coursebook quite judiciously, that is, they will need to select, adapt and omit activities rather than it as it stands

Relating the language to the students themselves is important as this will make the language more meaningful and memorable for all of them. Teachers can personalise any new language. Here are some examples.

Vocabulary of animals

Put the list of animals in order according to:

- a) how much you like them
- b) how much you'd like one as a pet
- c) how much you'd like to be one.

Vocabulary of the house

- a) Draw a plan of your room with its furniture and label it.
- b) Draw and describe or label your ideal room.

Have got

- a) What have you got in your schoolbag? (pockets/bedroom)
- b) How many teeth/scars/long fingernails/fillings have you got?
- c) Write three true sentences and three false sentences about yourself using *I've got* Read them out to the other students, who guess which are true and which are false.
- d) Find someone who ...

... has got a twin

... has got a computer

... has got a bicycle

... has got two or more cousins.

Clothes Vocabulary

a) Describe what you are wearing now.

b) Imagine you are in these situations. What are you wearing?

You are meeting the queen/president.

You are at a disco.

You are playing your favourite sport.

You are painting your bedroom.

c) What are your favourite clothes?

Can for ability

a) True and false sentences about what you can do.

b) Find someone who ...

... can play the piano

... can make a cake

... can sing a song in English

... can swim.

c) Imagine you are the following. What can you do? What can't you do?

a kangaroo a fish an alarm clock a telephone a robot a refrigerator

3.3 Catering For Different Types Of Learners

If students enjoy their English lessons, this can provide powerful motivation. Ensuring that lessons are well paced and contain different kinds of activity will keep students interested. It is also important that a teacher caters for different kinds of learner. Learners have different learning styles and preferences; if he/she caters only for one type of learner, then the others will fall behind. The important point here is variety in terms of his/her approach to learning activities.

3.3.1 What Different Kind Of Learners Are There?

There is no simple answer to this but research has shown that people do learn in different ways. Different types of learner have been identified according to which sense they seem to favour for learning and remembering.

VISUAL LEARNERS

Visual learners like to have visual cues. For example, they prefer reading instructions to listening to them because they understand and remember them better, and they prefer looking at their coursebook to listening to explanations.

AUDITORY LEARNERS

Auditory learners learn and remember better when they listen. Thus they prefer the teacher to give oral instructions and they remember things they have listened to more easily than things they have read.

KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

Kinesthetic learners prefer to learn by doing or by experience. They prefer demonstration to written or verbal explanations. They will learn better by being actively involved in a task, by acting, drawing or making something.

Other classifications of learning styles focus on how students like to learn.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

These learners prefer to study alone because it helps them remember and they feel they work more efficiently.

GROUP LEARNERS

These learners remember more and work more efficiently when they work with other people.

CONCRETE LEARNERS

Concrete learners like visual and verbal experiences and they dislike routine learning and written work. They like to be entertained and physically involved; they want immediate, varied and lively learning experiences.

ANALYTICAL LEARNERS

Analytical learners are independent learners who like problem solving and working things out for themselves. They like new learning material to be presented systematically and logically and they like to follow up on their own. They are serious and hardworking, and are badly affected by failure.

COMMUNICATIVE LEARNERS

Communicative learners like a social approach to learning. They learn well from discussion and group activities, and need personal feedback and interaction. They get on best in a democratically run class.

AUTHORITY-ORIENTED LEARNERS

Authority-Oriented learners relate well to a traditional classroom, preferring the teacher as an authority figure. They like clear instructions and they need structure and logical progression in what they learn.

The teacher does not need to worry about precise classification of his/her learners but he/she does need to find out something about their learning style and preferences for particular kinds of classroom activities, teacher behaviour, grouping arrangements and sensory modes.

This kind of information may help him/her to predict what will and will not work in his/her classes. In doing the task above he/she may have found he/she has a few ideas about some of his/her students but not all of them. Here are some ideas for finding out about his/her students' preferred learning styles more systematically

Questionnaires

He/She can use a questionnaire to find out about students' attitudes to different ways of learning. He/She can do this at the beginning of the year or after He/She has been teaching a group for a while and they have experienced different approaches. The following example page in Figure 6 gives a pictorial questionnaire which he/she can use at a very low level. He/She can, of course, do the same with statements in L1

When he/she has done the questionnaires he/she will need to analyse them. Are there any general tendencies in the class? Or is there great variety among individuals? General tendencies may mean that he/she should favour some teaching approaches over others whereas a lot of variation in the student responses may suggest that a more varied approach is better.

Formal and informal testing

He/She will be able to assess the effectiveness of the learning activities he/she uses by evaluating student progress, both through informal checking and formal test. Different students may remember different things if they have very different learning preferences but if there are some lessons that no one seems to remember well, this may indicate a general tendency in the class.

3.3.2 How Can You Cater For Different Learning Styles?

It is almost certainly the case that some learners have traditionally been at an advantage in the classroom. VISUAL LEARNERS, individual learners and AUTHORITY-ORIENTED LEARNERS have been favoured, particularly in secondary school, since much teaching has depended on the written word, individual work and the teacher in a traditional authoritarian role.

The teacher's own learning style and preferences may influence his/her teaching style. So if you are the type of learner described above (and it seems that many teachers are!), then your teaching style is likely to reflect this.

Obviously, other types of learner will then be at a disadvantage because they do not learn well in this way. Thus they may fall behind. It is important, therefore, to make a conscious effort to vary the teaching approaches you use, so that you cater for as many types of learner as possible.

We will look now at some different ways of approaching various learning activities to ensure that we cater for different types of learner.

Grammar presentation

Use pictures of a character, e.g. Dracula, a famous footballer or pop star, etc. (depending on the students' ages and interests) doing a variety of actions with a time next to each one. Hold the pictures up and try to elicit the language from the students. If they don't know how to say it, you tell them. Model it clearly, using your fingers to help if necessary to indicate each word, and get the students to repeat. Go through the pictures one by one, modelling and drilling. Recap on them orally before you write them up on the board at the end.

This approach is likely to appeal to students who like to learn by listening and repeating, that is AUDITORY LEARNERS. It may also appeal to CONCRETE LEARNERS who enjoy visual and verbal experiences.

Give each pair or group of students a set of sentences describing someone's day, written on separate strips of card. Give them another set of cards with times on (e.g. *at 7.00*) They match them up and put them in order as best they can. You then play a tape or read out the correct version. Students listen and correct their sentences as necessary. Then they copy them into their notebooks.

This approach is more suitable for VISUAL and KINESTHETIC LEARNERS since the written word is used and the students are involved in a task. Students who like working in groups also benefit as may ANALYTICAL and COMMUNICATIVE LEARNERS.

Put a picture of a person on the board and draw a clock, giving a certain time. Mime the activity, e.g. *Dracula wakes up at midnight*. As you mime, say the sentence and repeat it several times. At this stage the students only listen. After listening to all the sentences, tell the students to mime as you go through them again. First, you mime with them, then let them mime on their own. You can then say the sentences in a different order and get the students to do the right mime. You then mime and get the students to say the sentences together. After this, ask individuals to say the sentences

while the other students mime. Finally, show the students the sentences written on large cards; they read and mime.

This approach will appeal to KINESTHETIC LEARNERS who learn by doing, AUDITORY LEARNERS as the language is first spoken, and CONCRETE LEARNERS who enjoy physical involvement and lively learning experiences.

Write some example sentences on the board and ask the students to translate them. Name the tense, explain its use and underline the -s at the end of the verb. The students copy the example sentences and the grammar explanation into their notebooks.

This approach is likely to suit VISUAL LEARNERS, who like to see things written down, individual learners, and AUTHORITY-ORIENTED LEARNERS since the teacher is taking a more traditional role as instructor.

The four examples above are all valid ways of presenting this piece of new language and you probably came up with more good ideas of your own. As we have seen, different approaches will suit different types of learner.

Taking into consideration all of the different classifications of types of learner, the following factors seem to be the important things that we can vary in our approaches to teaching grammar:

- ... the type of prompts and aids used (written, visual, oral, acted out)
- ... interaction: individual, whole-class or groupwork or pairwork
- ... students can be told the rules, given a model or asked to work things out for themselves
- ... examples and practice before rules or vice versa
- ... student roles, degree and type of participation
- ... type of student response, i.e. oral, written, acting out.

By varying the approach you use for presentations and using different approaches when recycling grammar, you will be catering for different learner types in a mixed-ability class.

Vocabulary

There are a lot of different ways of presenting and practising vocabulary, too. By varying the type of learning activity, you can cater for different learning styles and help make the vocabulary more memorable.

Here are some ideas to start with:

- a) noises on tape
- b) pictures to elicit the words orally
- c) matching words to situations, definitions or pictures
- d) picture dictionaries
- e) translation

- f) mime or gesture
- g) a text with gaps and a list of the words

1 parts of the body

- Point to different parts of your body and say the word, e.g. foot . Repeat this, getting students to point to their feet. Do it a third time while the students say the words in chorus. Then give a student one of the other 'body parts' words on card; he/she says it out loud and the other students point.
- Give students a picture of a body and a jumbled list of the words for parts of the body. In pairs they match them.
- In groups, students draw a picture of a body on a poster. Then give them the words for parts of the body on cards; they stick them in the right place.
- Give students a list of the English words for parts of the body and a list of the words in L1. They use a dictionary and work individually to match them.

2 a set of action verbs

- Give the students sentences with gaps and pictures next to them; they have to choose the correct verb to complete the sentence.
- Mime and elicit the verbs, then students mime them.
- Show the students pictures of the actions and try to elicit the verbs orally.

Skills work

It is also important to provide practice in all the four skills so that different types of learner are catered for. For example, if you do a lot of silent reading and writing in class and little listening and oral work you are favouring VISUAL LEARNERS over AUDITORY LEARNERS. Thus you need to ensure that you include a good balance of the skills.

By varying the types of tasks and activities we use as well as the stage of the lesson at which we use them and the interaction patterns, we should be able to cater for different learning styles and preferences and thus maximise opportunities for all our students to learn.

3.4 Learner Training

Some students automatically adopt good learning habits. They pay attention in class and participate, keep neat notebooks, do their homework, carry out learning tasks efficiently and effectively by employing appropriate strategies, make progress in the language, know what their strengths and weaknesses are and know how to try to improve.

In other words, they know how to learn. Not all good language learners do the same things to help them learn, but they find things that work for them. It is absolutely essential in the mixed-ability class that all students are given help to develop good learning habits. If they are not helped, then learners who have not adopted good learning habits will fall further behind and the problem of differences in level will become worse.

Learner training raises students' awareness of how they learn and what they can do to help themselves. It also encourages them to take on more responsibility for their own learning. This in turn will help to equip them for learning beyond the classroom. There are many ways in which you can help your students become better learners.

3.4.1 Participation

It is important that learners are involved in the class. Often, weaker learners may lose concentration easily. Good classroom management skills can encourage participation as we have seen in previous parts.

Also, activities which aim to increase student motivation and which cater for different learning styles are essential in encouraging student involvement.

Here are discussed more ideas for encouraging active participation:

One of them is giving students management responsibilities, e.g. writing the date on the board at the beginning of the lesson, handing out books or papers, cleaning the board at the end of the lesson. Involving the students in this way gives them a sense of ownership of the classroom and a sense of self worth. In particular, it is a way of encouraging weaker learners to take an active role in the class as they can do these tasks just as well as the stronger students.

Another one is, when students are working in groups, appointing a group monitor. It is the monitor's responsibility to ensure that English is used and not L1 (if the task is supposed to be done in English), that everyone participates and that the task is completed satisfactorily.

Teaching the students classroom language also encourages active participation. This can be done in the beginning by getting students to match English phrases to the L1 equivalents. At the feedback stage, model and drill each expression. Following expressions can be taught firstly.

I'm sorry, I don't understand. I don't know.

Can you say that again, please?

How do you say... in English?

What does... mean?

How do you spell...?

What's the answer to number...?

Displaying classroom language on the classroom wall if possible so that it can be referred to as necessary is an effective way of teaching them. If it cannot be left up on the wall, it can be written on posters which you can carry with you. The students can also have a special section of their notebooks reserved for classroom language which they can refer to. New expressions can be added to classroom language throughout the course. For example, before doing a pairwork checking task you may want to teach other phrases, such as:

What did you put for number...? It's your go./You do the next one. I don't think that's right. I put the same as you.

By leaving the phrases on the board as students do the activity, the weaker students in particular have something to refer to and can say something.

One more activity to improve participation is displaying students' work with their names clearly visible. This can be work produced by a group or by individuals. Encouraging a sense of pride in their work can help motivate all students to produce something good.

Lesson summary sheets can also provide an incentive to students to participate.

What did I learn today?

How much English did I speak?

How much English did I write?

Did I concentrate for the whole lesson?

3.4.2 Notebooks

Good learners keep well organised notebooks or files. It is important that you encourage and train weaker students to do the same as they can use these notes outside class to help them catch up. Again, there are certain aspects of classroom management which are important:

Good boardwork is one of them . What you write should be complete, clear and legible, and the students should also know what and when they are to copy. They need sufficient time to copy, and they should be told to check what they have written and what their partner has written. You should also monitor, paying attention to poor copiers in particular.

Helping them to organise their notes is another one. If they have ringbinders to put photocopies in, always put holes in the photocopies for them so they can be filed away immediately. If they don't, make sure that any loose handouts for them to keep are pasted into their notebooks. Suggest how

they should organise their notes, e.g. chronological order or according to topic. Make the topic or objectives of each lesson clear and make sure they copy this into their notes.

Looking at their notebooks or files on a regular basis and giving them a mark or comment for organisation and presentation really motivates students to keep up the lesson.

Separate vocabulary notebooks are very useful and you can help students organise these. Teachers should use different ways of organising vocabulary notes when you present new vocabulary to the students and encourage them to transfer new vocabulary from their class notes or from their coursebook into their vocabulary book and use copies of given example in figure 7 to show students different ways of recording vocabulary.

3.4.3 Training In Using Reference Books

Students can help themselves by using reference books such as their coursebook, picture dictionaries, bilingual (and monolingual) dictionaries and grammar books. Good learners may automatically make use of these resources but weaker ones may not, so it is important that you raise students' awareness of the advantages of and basic techniques for using them.

The easiest way to do this is by introducing tasks into the classroom that require the students to use these resources, either to do the task in the first place or to check a task they have done. For example, encourage students to check the spelling of words in their dictionaries and train them in using workbook or grammar book keys (if available) to check their own or their partner's work.

Here are some examples of tasks for getting students used to using reference books:

For getting to know the coursebook and training in scanning skills, students can be given a list of questions and asked to find the answers as quickly as possible, e.g.

Where can you find a summary of the present simple?

Which unit is about animals?

Where is the grammar summary for each unit?

Another activity is giving students a list of words in L1 on a certain topic, then getting them to use a picture dictionary to find the English equivalents.

Students are also given a list of English words spelt wrongly. They have to use a dictionary to correct them.

Or give them some sentences in English which illustrate a particular grammar point. Some of the sentences should, however, contain mistakes. The students use a grammar book or a grammar

summary in their coursebook to check the sentences. For example, ask the students to refer to a summary of the form of the present simple to check the following sentences.

My father work in a bank.

Does you go to school by bus?

My brother don't like school.

I like English.

My mother drive a red car.

My best friend doesn't goes to my school.

3.4.4 English Outside Class

Good language learners use opportunities outside the classroom to improve their English. Raise your students' awareness of things they can do to help themselves to learn outside the classroom. Ask them (in groups) to BRAINSTORM a list of things they can do outside the class to help themselves to learn. Give them some examples first. They should try to come up with a list of ten things.

Here are some ideas.

- Write to a penfriend in English.
- Listen to English pop songs and learn a verse or the chorus.
- Get a graded reader from the library and read it.
- Stick labels with the English words on them on things in your bedroom (e.g. *wardrobe, mirror*).
- Spend ten minutes every day looking at your English book.
- Go up to tourists and ask them some questions.
- Memorise a short dialogue from your coursebook.
- Test yourself on vocabulary learnt in class.
- Watch programmes in English on TV (if they are not all dubbed).
- Write down all the English words you see in the street (shop names, adverts, etc.).
- Think of five English questions to ask your teacher.
- Do an exercise from your workbook every day and check your answers in the key.

The groups compare their lists and decide on the ten best ideas. Each student then chooses one to do for that week, and has to report back the following week on what he/she did and how successful it was.

3.4.5 Error Awareness

Good language learners learn from their mistakes. You can help to raise students' awareness of error and this can help weaker learners once again.

Error spotting

Choose a text, or part of one, from the students' coursebook, perhaps one they have already read. Rewrite it with mistakes in it if these could be mistakes of spelling, aspects of grammar, vocabulary, organisation and so on. You could use a range of types of mistake or just one type. Give it to the students, give them a time limit to spot the mistakes. They check in pairs or groups to find the original text in their coursebook and check if they found all the mistakes.

Error checklists

Collect common errors and write them onto a poster, along with their correct version. This should be displayed in the classroom for students to refer to. Students can also keep their own 'personal error' sheets in their file: they should record errors they have made, particularly common errors, with their correct versions and refer to this before handing in a piece of written work.

The good language learner

Ask the students to brainstorm a list of things that the good language learner does and a list of things that the bad language learner does. Give each character a name, e.g. Fluent Fuat and Terrible Tarik.

Fluent Fuat:

- ... always speaks English in class.
- ... learns from her mistakes.
- ... listens when the teacher is talking.
- ... reads her English book on the bus ...

Terrible Tarik:

- ... daydreams in his English class.
- ... speaks his own language in class.
- ... never listens to the teacher.
- ... often loses his notebook ...

Use this as a reminder to the students of good and bad learning strategies and behaviour throughout the year. Don't let them glorify Terrible Tarik!

3.4.6 Strategies For Skills Work

As an extension of the above, you can help raise students' awareness of good and bad learning strategies when it comes to the different skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. This can be done through quizzes, discussion or reading or listening activities, e.g. you could do a simple quiz (in English or L1) to raise students' awareness of how to approach reading. Write some questions like the examples below and give them to the students.

Which of the following good idea when you read English?

- a) look up every word you don't know
- b) guess the meaning of new words
- c) try to understand the general topic

Discuss the answers in L1 afterwards.

Here is an example for more ideas:

Example:

QUIZ

You are talking in English to a very nice girl/boy you meet on holiday.

- 1 He/she is speaking very quickly. What do you do?
 - a) Look at the floor.
 - b) Ask him/her to speak more slowly.
 - c) Nod and pretend to understand.
- 2 He/she uses a word you don't understand. Do you:
 - a) ignore it?
 - b) ask what it means immediately?
 - c) wait and see if it seems to be important or not?
- 3 He/she uses lots of words you don't understand. What do you do?
 - a) Ask him/her to speak more simply because your English isn't very good.
 - b) Say nothing.
 - c) Get out your dictionary.
- 4 You want to ask about something but you're not sure what the words is in English. Do you:
 - a) decide not to ask?
 - b) say you don't know the word in English and say the word in your own language?

- c) try to describe it?
- 5 Your friends is looking at you strangely after you said something. Do you:
- a) look strangely at him/her?
- b) say 'Did you understand what I said?'
- c) stay quiet.

3.4.7 Keeping Records Of Work

It is important that students know what they are supposed to have learned and that they have a clear idea of their strengths and weaknesses as language learners. This is an important part of making learners feel responsible for their own learning, and encouraging them to try to improve.

End-of-lesson summaries can be used for students to think about what they have learned in a particular lesson, and they are very useful when students come to revise. Use a simple format so that students can complete them at the end of every lesson, e.g.

Date:
What we learned today:
What I found easy:
What I found difficult:
Homework task:

When you first introduce these, you can give a little time at the end of each class to filling them in. When the students have got used to doing it, they can do it alone after the class. You will need to check from time to time that they have been doing it.

Summaries can also be used at the end of a topic-based unit of work or project, e.g.

This unit of work is about:
We studied the following language points:
We practiced the following skills:
What I did well:
What I didn't do well:
What I am going to do to improve:

Summaries can also be used to look at a block of work over a few weeks. The students can look back at their end-of-lesson summaries and fill in a more complete form. (Figure 8)

This is particularly useful in preparation for an individual counselling session, a self-access lesson or prior to a test.

It is important that you look at the students' records because it may be that they are over- or underestimating their level and their progress. It is a good idea to spend some time speaking to students individually about what they have put. If this is not always possible, monitor as they do the task and speak to those who you think are not evaluating themselves accurately, or collect the summaries in and then see who you need to speak to.

CHAPTER 4

4. GRADING TASKS

The idea here is that students work on the same basic activity but with different tasks graded at varying levels of difficulty.

1 An example-dictation

Select a text to dictate to the students but give different students a different task to do:

- Give the students in the strongest group (e.g. blue group) a blank piece of paper.
- Give the middle-level group (e.g. green group) a gapped version of the text to be dictated.
- Give the lowest-level group (e.g. yellow group) a complete version of the text to be dictated with multiple-choice options for some of the words or expressions.
- Dictate the text in the normal way, reading it through once at normal speed and then dictating it in chunks, pausing to allow the students to complete their tasks. The students in the strongest group write down everything. Those in the middle-level group fill in the gaps in their text and those in the lowest-level group choose the correct word or expression from the choices given.
- After reading it out in chunks, read the whole text out again at normal speed for students to check their work individually.
- As an optional task you can get the students who did the same task to check their work with each other (i.e. blue with blue, green with green, yellow with yellow).
- Then regroup the students into multicoloured groups, i.e. groups of one yellow, one blue, one green student. The students then check their work together. They should not show each other their texts but talk through them, checking that everything is there and words are correctly spelt as they go. You should monitor and help as necessary.
- A whole-class feedback should not actually be necessary but you could, as a final stage, give students a copy of the original text to compare with or refer students to their coursebook if the text came from there. (Woodward 1991)

Here is an example of a text.

Friday 13th November

What a day. My alarm clock didn't ring so I overslept. I woke up at ten o'clock with a terrible toothache. I suddenly remembered I had an appointment with the dentist at quarter past ten. I ran out of the house and down the street. Then I saw some girls laughing at me. I looked down. I was still in my pyjama trousers. I was very embarrassed. I ran back home but then I found I didn't have my keys. I couldn't open the door. I got a ladder from the garage and started to climb up to my

bedroom window. But the ladder was very old and It broke. I fell off and broke my leg. Now I'm in hospital. My tooth still hurts and my leg hurts, too!

4.1 Advantages And Disadvantages Of Using Graded Tasks

4.1.1 What Are The Advantages?

- All students are challenged at an appropriate level of difficulty and can get involved in doing the task. No one should be left behind or have nothing to do.
- All students can succeed in completing the task given to them, and this is motivating for them.
- You can design different tasks for lots of different activity types (e.g. listening, reading, vocabulary practice).
- The multicoloured checking stage empowers the weaker students since they are the ones who are most likely to have a complete and correct version of the text. They are therefore in a position to help the stronger students.
- This checking stage also promotes student co-operation and tolerance

4.1.2 What Are The Disadvantages?

- There is much more preparation for the teacher.
- Students may feel labelled as weak, medium or strong and therefore embarrassed. The weaker students in particular may feel demotivated.
- Stronger students may resent always having to work 'harder' (as they see it).
- The teacher may get confused about who is doing what, especially in a large class.

4.1.3 What Are The Solutions?

- It does mean more preparation, but the tasks can be kept and hopefully used again with other classes and by other teachers. It is worth building up a bank of this kind of task and keeping them for future use, perhaps with a group of teachers, maybe even from different schools.
- Let the students choose which 'colour' activity they want. When you introduce the system of graded activities, make it lighthearted, e.g. *Who's feeling tired today? OK, you can do a yellow activity.* Colours are better than numbers or letters since they don't have grading associations. (You could use other names, e.g. animals, fruit). You should keep a note of what level of activity each student chooses each time

for evaluation purposes. If you use the same coding system, the students will get to know which activity is most likely to suit them. Occasionally you may want to intervene if you feel they are over- or underchallenging themselves.

If the students have a choice, they can perhaps sometimes be allowed to do an easier task. But it is up to you to ensure they do challenge themselves sufficiently. Individual counselling may help if necessary. Good classroom management and organisational skills are crucial here. The following steps may help.

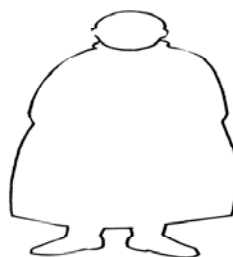
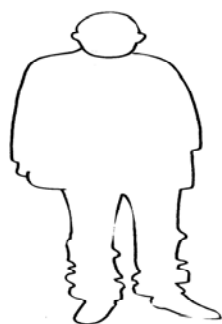
When preparing the worksheets, write in one corner the colour, or actually mark each one with a coloured pen/crayon after you've copied them. When asking what colour activity the students want to do, get them to put their hands up and count them to ensure the groups are roughly equally sized. Before doing the activity, it may be useful to group the students according to colour so they can't see the other groups' worksheets. When regrouping the students into multicoloured groups for checking, the students will have to move. Give clear instructions for them to go round saying their colour to each other, to find the appropriate partners. They should sit down as soon as they have found their group of three. You can then add any extra students to the groups if numbers make it necessary.

4.2 Picture Dictation

This is a fun activity and can be adapted to provide practice in many different lexical and structural areas. This example practises describing people, their appearance and clothes. The stronger students start with a piece of paper and have to draw the people from scratch. The middle-level students are given outlines of the people, and the weaker ones the outlines with some details filled in.

Read out the text below to the students. The stronger students have to listen and understand everything in order to complete the task, whereas the middle level and weaker students with the partly drawn pictures do not have to understand everything.

Graded picture dictation



This is a picture of my grandfather and grandmother. They are quite strange! My grandfather is very tall and thin. He's bald but he's got thick black eyebrows and a big thick moustache. He wears glasses on the end of his big nose. He's got small bright eyes and he stares hard at you. He always looks very serious; he never smiles. He looks quite frightening if you don't know him, I think. He usually wears an old jacket and trousers which are too long. He uses a walking stick because he can't walk very well. Oh and he's always smoking his pipe of course.

My grandmother, on the other hand, is very short and fat, almost round. She has short curly hair. She wears glasses on the end of her nose too. She's very different from my grandfather, she's always smiling and happy. She usually wears a blouse with a high neck and a long skirt. She loves reading so she's always got a book in her hand. Oh, and she always wears a big gold heart on a chain round her neck: It was the first present she got from my grandfather.

4.3 Vocabulary Activities

Crazy texts

Read the following text. What do you notice about it?

The day a policeman saw a man walking along the street down a penguin. He went up to the man and said, 'Excuse me, sir. Is that big penguin?

'No,' replied the man, 'It isn't mine. I just found street.'

'Well, why don't they take it to the zoo?'

That's a red Idea,' said the cat. 'I will.'

The next day, the policeman saw the man bad. He zoo very surprised because the penguin was still with talk.

'Excuse It, sir,' said the park, 'but didn't you take the penguin to out zoo yesterday ?

'Oh yes, I are,' replied the man, 'and we really enjoyed It. Today we're going to saw to the cinema.'

This is an example of a crazy text: there are a number of words in it that are wrong. The most difficult task you can give the students to do with this is to find the wrong words and replace them with the correct ones. This task would be suitable for the strongest students.

Cover the ideas below. How could you adjust the task to varying degrees to make it easier? Think of as many ways as you can before reading on.

Here are some ways of adjusting the level of difficulty of the task:

- Tell the students how many wrong words there are before they begin. They have to identify them and correct them.
- Indicate which lines the wrong words are in (and the number of words in each line). Students identify and correct them.
- Before students go on to correct the wrong words, they receive feedback on whether they have correctly identified them (e.g. via an answer sheet).
- Underline the wrong words before you copy the text. Students correct them.
- Give students a jumbled list of the correct words to replace the wrong ones.

Here is the correct version of the text. The words in capitals are the ones that were wrong in the crazy text:

ONE day a policeman saw a man walking along the street WITH a penguin. He went up to the MAN and said, 'Excuse me, sir. Is that YOUR penguin?'

'No/ replied the man. 'it isn't mine. I just found IT.'

'Well, why don't YOU take it to the zoo?'

That's a GOOD idea,' said the MAN. 'I will.'

The next day, the policeman saw the man AGAIN. He WAS very surprised because the penguin was still with HIM.

'Excuse ME, sir/ said the POLICEMAN, 'but didn't you take the penguin to THE zoo yesterday?'

'Oh yes, I DID,' replied the man, 'and we really enjoyed it. Today we're going to GO to the cinema.'

Wordsearch

There are ways of making this more or less difficult. Look at this example.

This is a very easy task and only requires the students to recognise the words in the square.

ideas to make the task more challenging:

give students skeleton versions of the words, e.g. s__a, m__r__r.

give them the L1 equivalents of the words.

give them pictures of the words.

tell them there are 14 things in the word square that they can find in the house.

Tell them to find as many 'things in the house' as they can.

tell them to find as many words connected to one topic as they can and to identify the topic.

As a follow-up, you should check that students know the meaning of the words. You could supply the definitions or a translation which the students have to match to the words. Or you could get the fast finishers to produce these definitions.

Find the following words in the square (→ and ↓):

bed	bookshelf	mirror	television	carpet
lamp	sofa	cupboard	fridge	wardrobe
armchair	cooker	table	CD player	

S	O	F	A	C	F	E	P	T	A
C	W	A	R	D	R	O	B	E	P
U	C	B	M	P	I	T	O	L	M
P	O	E	C	L	D	A	O	E	I
B	O	D	H	A	G	B	K	V	R
O	K	M	A	Y	E	L	S	I	R
A	E	Y	I	E	N	E	H	S	O
R	R	U	R	R	G	L	E	I	R
D	L	A	M	P	B	I	L	O	F
C	A	R	P	E	T	K	F	N	E

4.4. Self Access

Another possibility for coping with mixed-ability classes is different students working on different tasks, with different resources in the classroom, individually or in groups. In this chapter, we will consider aspects of the self-access approach. The advantages of the self access can be described as mentioned. Firstly it caters for a wide mix of ability. Teaching can be tailored to the individual's needs. Another point is that learners work on something that they think is useful and interesting. Then it increases learner autonomy and gives students a sense of responsibility for their own

learning. Teachers can spend more time with those students who need help. Lastly it adds variety to classes

4.4. 1 Materials That Can Be Used

It can be time consuming to build up a bank of materials for students to use, but well : worth it. There are many types of material suitable for self access and you don't need to create a lot of materials from scratch as many can be found ready made. If you do want to create materials (e.g. sets of questions for games), one idea to reduce your work is to get a class of higher-level students in the school to make up the questions for the lower levels. This also has the advantage of involving the students from the outset in the self-access centre.

Students' workbooks

Provide a list of exercises that students haven't done, with a key in order to check their own work. If their workbooks do not contain one, you will need to copy the one from the teacher's book or provide one.

Books of grammar and vocabulary exercises

If these are not photocopiable, cut up a copy of the book and laminate each sheet to ensure it is kept clean and in good condition. The students can write their answers to the exercises in their notebooks, then check with the key.

Readers and accompanying tapes

Graded readers can be provided at different levels of difficulty. Provide headphones for listening to the tapes if possible, if not a tape recorder for a group in the corner of the room will do.

Video

If you have a video recorder, you can make video cassettes available, preferably with accompanying worksheets. If you are using published EFL video material, these will be available in book form. If you are using authentic off-air recordings (bearing in mind copyright restrictions), you may need to make up worksheets. Rather than creating a new worksheet for each, create one that can be used for many different programmes.

Computers and CD-ROM

These are ideal for self-access work as immediate feedback is provided and the technology is motivating for teenagers.

Audio cassettes

Copies of supplementary resource books of listening material, with the tape, can be used, as can authentic material such as pop songs, along with worksheets and copies of the lyrics. Ask the students themselves to provide the songs and lyrics.

Magazines

Subscribe to magazines produced for learners of English, e.g. *BBC English*, or, try to get hold of some produced for English teenagers. As with authentic video recordings, provide re-useable worksheets with general questions to answer about the contents and then a more in-depth vocabulary and summarising task for one article of their choice.

Games

Board games based on questions in English, e.g. Trivial Pursuit, Snakes and Ladders or word games, e.g. Scrabble, Boggle, are another possibility for self access. Dominoes sets can be made for many language areas, e.g. matching words and pictures, opposites or L1 and English words, e.g.



Reference books

Bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, grammar books and encyclopaedias, should be available for students to refer to.

4.4.2 Organisation Of The Materials

Ideally, every school would have a permanent self-access room with computers, CD-ROM, video, listening facilities, readers and accompanying tapes, worksheets, grammar exercises with accompanying key, games and so on. Most schools do not have the space for this, however, and the self-access facilities may be more limited.

It is still possible to have a small but perfectly adequate self-access centre contained in a cupboard. If you don't have a cupboard, even a self-access box can be sufficient! It is very important that materials are indexed and clearly organised:

- Laminated worksheets can be kept in files clearly marked as 'grammar', 'listening' or 'Vocabulary'. Answer keys should be provided.
- If copyright and your school budget permit photocopies, these can be kept in plastic envelopes in the file. These will need replacing now and again so you will need to check on a regular basis how many are left.

- It is useful to use a system to indicate levels of difficulty. This could be done with colours, e.g. blue for most difficult, green for medium, yellow for the easiest (preferably the same colour system you use in class for graded tasks).
- If you are using the self-access collection with different years, you will need also to mark which year the materials are designed for.
- Readers should be arranged according to levels of difficulty (use the same colour coding that you use for other materials) and also, if you have quite a large collection, in order according to type (e.g. classics, non-fiction, crime). You could supply a photocopiable index of the readers for easy reference. It is useful for students to borrow the graded readers and take them home, too. Provide a notebook in which they write their name, the title of the book, the date they borrowed it and the date they returned it.
- An index of video and one for audio materials with brief summaries of the contents will help students choose what they want to work with. Have a space on the summary form for students to write a brief 'review'.

As well as organising the materials so that students can find their way around them, it is also important to train students to put them back in the right place. If you have board games, put a label on the lid saying what the box should contain (e.g. two dice, a board, six counters) so that students can easily check everything is there when they begin and when they finish. Laminated worksheets should be clearly numbered so they can be put back in the right place in the file.

4.4.3 Student Choice In What They Do

It is important that students choose something that is useful for them in terms of improving their English. It is also important that they choose something that they like doing to ensure that their motivation is kept up. If there is a mismatch between their needs and their likes, then a compromise may be reached in which they spend part of the time on something they need and the rest on something they like.

You will need to set aside some time to introduce the students to the self-access materials when you first use them. You could provide a worksheet in L1 with questions that the students have to answer, e.g. *Where are the video cassettes/ How do you choose a video? Where can you find a worksheet?*

This should be done the lesson before you actually want to use the self-access materials. Make sure the students understand why you are using them as well as the different possibilities available. Get

them to choose what they want to do in advance so that they can start work immediately in the self-access lesson.

Provide a form for them to complete in which they have to write down what they plan to do and why, like the one on Figure 9. And a partially completed example is given on Figure 10.

Students hand this in to you so you can check that they are choosing sensibly. If they are not doing something appropriate, then use gentle persuasion to encourage them to choose more suitable activities.

4.4.4 Ensure Students Are Working

The teacher's main roles in self-access lessons or parts of lessons are as:

Provider - the teacher provides the materials.

Guide - the teacher may need to help the students choose and find appropriate materials.

Monitor - the teacher needs to ensure all the students are working and using English and may need to intervene to help or correct.

Resource - the teacher should be available to answer any questions that students may have about the material they are working on, or be able to direct students to another reference source if necessary.

Instructions on any materials for self access need to be very clear. You shouldn't have to give instructions orally, but you will need to check as you go around the class that all the students have understood and are following the written instructions.

Some activities may be done individually, others in groups or pairs. The teacher may need to help organise groupings. If discipline problems arise, the teacher may need to intervene and change groupings.

Self access obviously means that the students are taking on greater responsibility for their own learning. Lazy or tired students may see it as an opportunity to take a rest. Disruptive students may take the opportunity to play around while your back is turned. How can you avoid this?

- By introducing self access gradually: explain why you are doing it and start doing it occasionally and for short periods of time.
- By making sure everybody has chosen something appropriate to work on.
- By checking that everyone understands what they are supposed to do (check the weaker students first).
- By making sure everybody has something to do all the time (make sure students know what to do when they finish an activity, i.e. evaluate it, replace it in the file and choose something else).

- By closer monitoring of the weaker and more difficult students.
- By getting the students to keep a record of each activity they do and how long they spend on it, to evaluate it and say what they learned from it.
- By having a clear disciplinary procedure which all the students are aware of.

The record sheets that the students complete are very important. You can fill in comments too if you think it is useful. Using these with self evaluation and individual counselling, you can see if the student is making progress.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONTENT TEACHING

One of the differences among learners is in their knowledge of the world, their talents and interests, general knowledge and knowledge of other school subjects. Just because a learner has not been a successful language learner does not mean that he/she is lacking in knowledge or skills in other areas. By providing opportunities in the English class for students to make use of this other knowledge we can do the following.

- Encourage a sense of self esteem.
- Encourage respect and create bonds between learners of different levels.
- Ensure everyone has something to contribute.
- Motivate weaker students to contribute and take an interest.
- Increase the value of English as a genuine means of communication.
- Provide opportunities for acquisition of the language.
- Give English lessons an educational purpose beyond the teaching of language.
- Make lessons relevant to the learners by catering for their interests.
- Take learners' minds off the fact that they are learning language forms and enable them to focus on meaning and communication.
- Allow learners to show off their knowledge and 'teach the teacher'.

For these kinds of activities it is best to have students working in groups of mixed language level.

5.1.1 Quizzes

These can take various forms and are very motivating for students. Try a quiz on a particular subject area, e.g. geography or have a variety of subjects. It is best if you liaise with the relevant teacher(s) to find out what the students have been studying, then make up questions accordingly.

Give each group of students a list of the questions and a time limit to work on answering them. Give each group a team name and ask them to tell you their answers for each question. They score a point for each correct answer. The winner is the team with most points at the end. (Don't correct pronunciation or grammatical errors during the activity as this will detract from the purpose; you may decide, however, to make a note of any errors and do a correction spot at the end of the lesson or in the next lesson.)

Quizzes can also be done orally. You can do this in different ways.

- Each team has a question to answer in turn. If they can't answer it, it is passed on to the other teams in turn, who can win a bonus point by answering correctly. You could let students choose the subject category.
- Questions are asked and whichever team thinks they know the answer can have a go at answering by making a predetermined noise (e.g. saying *Ping!* or *Beep!*) and saying their answer. If they are right, they score a point; if they are wrong, another team can have a go.
- Teams can also make up their own questions. Monitor to help with and check the language as they write their questions. During the quiz itself, try not to interrupt to correct the language but leave it until afterwards. Only intervene if communication problems occur and don't make a big issue of it.

You can also design quizzes to practise specific language points, e.g.

... dates (history): *When did a person first walk on the moon?* (1969) ... past passives (science, history): *Where was John Lennon shot?* (New York) ... past simple (history): *When did Atatürk die?* (1938) ... present passive (general knowledge, science): *What is water made of?* (hydrogen and oxygen)

You can also use quizzes for *How...?* questions, e.g.

1 How old are the Alps?

a) 400 million years b) 50 million years c) 15 million years (Answer: c)

2 How fast can an ostrich run?

a) 50 km per hour b) 60 km per hour c) 70 km per hour (Answer: a)

5.1.2 Games

Noughts and crosses

- * Draw a noughts and crosses square on the board as illustrated on the left.
- * Prepare questions in advance; you will need to have several ready for each square. Again, they could be on one subject, such as geography, or practising one structure, or they could be a mixture. They should be numbered to correspond with a particular square.
- * Divide the class into two teams: noughts and crosses.
- * They take it in turns to choose a square, then you ask them a question.
- * If they answer correctly, you mark it with their sign (O or X). If they don't, it remains available. The next time someone chooses it, ask a different question.
- * The aim is to get a line of three noughts or crosses in any direction.

Obviously, with a large class, the size of the two groups may be very large. It is a good idea, then, to get the students working in smaller groups after you have played the game a couple of times, with a student playing the role of question master. You could supply the questions (the same ones for the different groups) or get the groups to make up questions to pass on to another group.

5.1.3 Pictionary

This is a commercial game, but it can easily be played in class. The game can initially be played with the class divided into two teams, but is again best done in smaller groups. The teams can take it in turns to play.

- Give one student a word, expression or sentence on a piece of paper. The student has to come out to the board and try to draw it.
- The rest of the team tries to guess what was written on the piece of paper. These can be words, expressions or short sentences, depending on the level of the class, e.g.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Expressions</u>	<u>Short sentences</u>
rose	<i>an elephant's trunk</i>	<i>The Eiffel Tower is in Paris,</i>
television	<i>a dog barking</i>	<i>Spiders have eight legs,</i>
bread	<i>a hot sunny day</i>	<i>The phone's ringing.</i>

- The language you use here should be known but you could supply a translation on the piece of paper which weaker students can look at before they draw.
- The other members of the team have to guess in English. If they don't get it within the time limit you set, the other team can have one guess.

This game will allow students who are good at drawing well (and quickly) to shine.

What P...?

Again, do this with the whole class in two (named) teams before dividing the class into smaller groups.

- Copy the grid on the left onto the board, or preferably onto an overhead transparency. In each diamond write a letter, or pair of letters. You need to prepare questions in advance.
- Each team takes it in turns to choose a diamond; you ask them a question.
- If they answer correctly, they win that diamond, i.e. you write the team name in it.
- They start on the left-hand side of the grid, and the aim is to make a line across the grid. When they reach the other side they have won.

- They cannot ask for a diamond that has already been occupied by the other team. Each diamond they ask for must join onto the side of one they have already won.

Questions are of this type:

What P is the capital of France?

Who was the JL who was shot dead in New York in 1980?

What H is produced by bees?

What W is made of hydrogen and oxygen?

You could choose a particular theme for all the questions or have a mix of subject areas.

- After playing with the whole class, you can divide the students into four or six teams; supply each pair of teams with a grid (if it's laminated it could be used again and again). Give a set of questions to each team.

(This game is based on a TV game show called *Blockbusters*.)

- Three, two, one This works well with the whole class divided into four or more teams.
- Read out each description and when a team thinks they know what is being described they can volunteer an answer.
- If they answer correctly at the beginning of the description, they score three points, in the middle two points and at the end, one point.
- If their guess is wrong, they cannot try again immediately, but must wait until another team has tried to answer.

Questions are of this type:

This is about an animal. When this animal is born it is only about two centimetres long, blind and helpless. It crawls up its mother's stomach and into her pouch and it stays there for about six months. The baby is called a joey. This animal grows to a height of about two metres and moves by hopping on its back legs. It lives in one continent only, Australia. What is the name of this animal?

(Answer: a kangaroo.)

This game provides excellent listening practice for students. (Britten ;1990)

Snakes and ladders

This is another game that can be played in small groups. You need to supply sets of questions on cards along with each board. Players take it in turns to throw the dice and move their counters on from the 'Start' box. Another member of the team picks up a question card and asks the question. If they answer the question correctly, they go forward three squares; if they get it wrong, they go back three squares. If they land at the bottom of a ladder they go up; if they land on a snake's mouth they go down the snake. The winner is the person to make it 'home' (the 'Finish' box) first. Figure 11

5.1.4 Choosing Topics

By letting students choose topics to work on you allow a very mixed group of students to satisfy a wide range of interests and thereby keep up interest and motivation.

My vocabulary



Vocabulary is very important and students should be encouraged to build up their knowledge of vocabulary as much as possible. While much of what the teacher presents at low levels is CORE VOCABULARY, the students can be encouraged to expand their personal vocabulary by exploring subjects that are interesting to them. This is motivating and something that students of all levels can do with the aid of a bilingual or picture dictionary.

- * Ask the students to think of a topic in which they are interested or give them a list of possible topics, e.g. football, fashion, pop music, swimming, dogs.

- * Ask them to draw a single image in simple outline (to fill a page) to represent their topic. See the examples on the left.

- * The students can work in pairs or groups if they have chosen the same topics, or individually if they have a topic that no one else is interested in.

- * Tell them to think of ten words associated with this topic in L1, then to find them, using a dictionary, in English. They should write them onto their drawing wherever they like, adding the L1 equivalent, a short sentence in English using the word or a small drawing to help them remember the meaning.

- * This work could be presented as a poster or as a page in their vocabulary notebooks.

- * When you have done this in class, students can do the same on a different topic of their choice for homework or in self-access slots.

- * You should encourage weaker students to recycle core vocabulary in this way.

- * With students who are not complete beginners, get them to give a short talk about their interest or hobby, using the vocabulary poster as a visual aid. (Morgan , Rinvoluceri ; 1986)

My lesson

This idea can be used as a warmer in your lessons. Ask the students to bring in a picture that is associated in some way with one of their interests or hobbies. Use this as the basis for BRAINSTORMING of vocabulary, perhaps about five words. In particular, encourage the weaker

and less motivated students to bring in a picture; it will help them to feel involved in the classes when it is their picture that is the focus of attention.

Project work and student presentations

PROJECT WORK and STUDENT PRESENTATIONS offer an ideal opportunity for students to bring in their knowledge of the world and interests if they are allowed some choice in which topics to focus on.

A collection of pictures like the one on Figure 13 or something similar to find out about your students' strengths and interests.

5.2 Activities With Different Responses

Some classroom activities allow for different types of responses from different students. This is another very good option for mixed-ability classes since it allows students to do what they are good at and thereby raise self esteem. All of these activities involve the students in producing language (writing or speaking) at some point and all of them are based on groupwork. Groups should be organised so that students are mixed in terms of language level and other skills.(Tice ;1997)

5.2. 1 Project Work

If students are working in groups on a project there will be different tasks to do. Let us imagine a project in which students are looking at the topic of food and health and are going to produce a poster and oral presentation as an end product.

Here are some of the different tasks which the students may need to carry out

- * Reading reference sources, finding out about food values and nutrition, revising notes from biology lessons.
- * Thinking up a questionnaire about eating habits (in L1 if done outside class on family, friends, etc.; in English if it is to be done on classmates).
- * Writing out or typing up the questionnaires.
- * Carrying out the interviews in L1 or L2.
- * Analysing questionnaires (statistics).
- * Transferring statistical information to a graph or pie chart/bar chart.
- * Finding or drawing pictures.
- * Writing up descriptions and findings.
- * Graphic display: designing and mounting the poster.
- * Oral presentation of findings.

Different members of the group will be able to take on different responsibilities. The different tasks suggest the need for:

- ... reading skills (L1 or L2 depending on reference books)
- ... translation into L2
- ... using background knowledge about biology/chemistry
- ... knowledge of English vocabulary on the topic
- ... the ability to use a dictionary
- ... clear handwriting or typewriting or word processing skills
- ... logical thinking/imagination for the questionnaire
- ... speaking skills
- ... knowledge of maths and statistics
- ... graphic skills
- ... artistic skills
- .. writing skills: text organisation, knowledge of grammar, punctuation, etc.

Suggested tasks and skills

Tasks

- designing the clothes
- finding or making the clothes ; modelling the clothes
- helping the models dress/put on make-up
- directing the fashion show and writing instructions for it
- orally describing the clothes
- writing a description of what each model is wearing / filming/videoing the fashion show
- interviewing the designer(s)

Skills

- the ability to draw
- the ability to sew or make clothes from, e.g. paper, foil
- knowledge of English vocabulary for describing clothes, materials, styles
- language for describing ways of moving, direction, etc.
- the ability to use a dictionary
- clear handwriting or word processing skills
- using a video camera
- speaking skills
- the ability to apply make-up

The following figure (Figure 14) provides students with a form which will help them to plan ; the steps of PROJECT WORK carefully and allocate tasks accordingly. It also includes ; sections for evaluation of the PROJECT WORK

PROJECT WORK is therefore ideal for classes of mixed ability since there are many different tasks to be done, which demand different types and levels of skills. It is important that tasks are clearly allocated so that weaker, quieter or less enthusiastic students are actively involved.

5.2.2 Roleplays

Any speaking activity which involves students taking on different roles is suitable for mixed ability as the roles will vary in terms of the demands upon the speaker. That is, some of the roles may be bigger, some smaller, some more or less demanding in terms of language to be produced. Everyone can be involved but at their own level. ROLEPLAY is also a very versatile activity and can be used to practise a wide range of language items in many different situations.

Example:

A You have just ridden into B on your bicycle. You think it was his/her fault because he/she stepped into the road without looking. Get off your bike and go and speak to B.

B A stupid girl/boy on his/her bike (A) has just ridden into you. It was certainly A's fault and your leg is hurting badly. Go and speak to A.

C You are a policeman. You see two people arguing. They have just had an accident. You need to fill in a report.

Time of accident: Place: Names or parties involved: Reasons for accidents:

- Give the students time to prepare their roles first, by putting all the As, all the Bs and J all the Cs together. Give the role of the policeman to the weaker students and help them more at the preparation stage by getting them to write down the questions they I will need to ask. This preparation is not unnatural as they have a form to complete.
- The other roles require more creative and freer language use.

5.2.3 Bilingual Roleplays

In a bilingual ROLEPLAY there are three characters: one who speaks only English, one who speaks only L1, and one who speaks both languages. The situation and setting can be any, but the English-

only speaker and the L1 -only speaker want to communicate with each other and so must use the bilingual speaker as an interpreter. This is a very common real-life situation. With a mixed-ability class obviously the weaker students can take the part of the L1 speaker and stronger students the part of the English-only speaker. Here are some ideas.

Situation one (adapt to your teaching situation)

A You are an English person, John/Jane, visiting your penfriend Carlos/Carmen. You don't speak any Spanish. Your penfriend introduces you to another friend who looks very nice but doesn't speak any English. You would like to know something about him/her. Think of what questions you would like to ask.

B You are Carlos/Carmen and your penfriend, John/Jane, is visiting you. He/she doesn't speak any Spanish but you speak Spanish and English. You introduce John/Jane to another Spanish friend, Pedro/Patricia, who doesn't speak any English. How do you introduce them? If they want to communicate with each other you will have to act as interpreter.

C You are Pedro/Patricia and you don't speak any English. Your friend Carlos/Carmen introduces you to his/her English penfriend who looks very nice but doesn't speak any Spanish. You would like to know something about him/her. Think of what questions you would like to ask.

Situation two

A You are an English person on holiday in a foreign country. You don't feel well so you go to the doctor. You don't speak his/her language and the doctor doesn't speak English.

B You are a doctor. You don't speak English and now an English person has come to see you. Maybe another patient can help.

C You are a patient waiting to see the doctor. You can speak English. (Prodromou;1992)

5.2. 4 Drama

Putting on sketches or plays requires different responses from different students. There are small and big parts to play, speaking parts and non-speaking parts. There may be a need for script writers, an artist, a props maker, a stage director, a costume designer, a prompt and so on depending on the type and scale of the performance. On a smaller scale, students can be asked to act out a scene based on a picture or a short extract of dialogue.

Pictures

Students work in groups (mixed levels). You provide them with a picture in which there are at least two people. You can either give all the groups the same picture or I different pictures. Give them a list of questions to discuss, e.g.

Where are these people?

What is their relationship?

What has just happened?

What is happening now?

What is going to happen?

The students discuss the questions in detail. You then ask them to act out a short scene between the people. This can provide for a little or a lot of dialogue between any number of people, depending on the students' interpretation of the picture. While all the students have been involved in creating the scene, not all need be involved in acting it out.

If each group used the same picture, they can compare interpretations after watching the different sketches and decide which one was best or most original. If they used different pictures, make sure they don't show the other groups their picture. Then display all the pictures and get the students to decide which scene matches which picture as the students act out their scenes.

Extracts of dialogue

This activity is similar, except the starting point for the scene they act out is a short dialogue. This should be very simple in terms of language but 'ambiguous' in terms of the topic. That is, it should not be obvious what the people are talking about, who they are or where they are from the dialogue. The students again discuss questions about the dialogue and then have to extend the dialogue, incorporating at some point the part they have read and then act it out.

Here are two examples of the type of dialogue you can use:

Example 1:

A: Shh

B: *What?*

A: Shh

B: *Oh no.*

A: *Did you hear that?*

B: *What?*

A: Shh.

B: *Aagh!*

Example 2:

A: / *don't want it.*

B: *But it's yours.*

A: / *don't care.*

B: *Here you are.*

A: *No!*

B: *All right.*

5.2.5 Responding To Text

Students can be asked to produce in groups a written or oral response (e.g. a poster or a short ROLEPLAY) to something they have read or listened to. There are many examples of this type of activity and basically any text can be used.

Here are two ideas.

1 Listen to a song with a 'story' or a 'message' and do comprehension work on the lyrics. Students then create and act out a scene based on the song.

2 Read a poem, write a similar one and illustrate it. The poems you choose should be simple and appealing to the age group you are teaching. Below is the beginning of an animal alphabet poem (based on the idea in Edward Lear's *An Animal Alphabet* in *The Rattle Bag*, eds. Heaney S. and Hughes T., Faber and Faber 1982).

A The Angry Artistic Ant, who lived alone in an old apartment, and painted pictures of apples and aeroplanes.

B The Beautiful Beetle, who always wore big blue boots when it didn't rain, and forgot to wear them when it did.

C The Calm Crazy Cow, who cried and ate chocolate cake and curry in front of the fire when she caught a cold.

Ask the students to illustrate a verse you give them to check comprehension. They could do this through mime, a short sketch or a labelled picture.

Then, in groups, they write another verse for a different letter and present it to the class in any way they like (written with a picture to illustrate it, read aloud with mime, etc.). (Puchta, Gerngross;1992)

5.3 Open-Ended Activities

These are activities which are designed to let students respond at their own level. Unlike graded tasks, they do not require production of different worksheets, although the principle of letting students work at their own level is the same. Students work individually, in pairs or in groups at their own level on the same task. Most, but not all, require the student to produce language.

5.3.1 Diaries Or Student Journals

Students can keep a diary, journal or personal notebook in English. At low levels it is probably a good idea to set a topic for each entry, e.g. *My hobbies*, *My family*, *What I did at Christmas*, etc.

although later on they could choose what to write about. The aim is to get the students to write whatever they can on the topic in a certain time. This can be done either in class time (e.g. ten minutes at the beginning or end of a lesson) or, when the students are used to it, at home.

The emphasis should be on FLUENCY rather than ACCURACY so any feedback you give (e.g. written comments) should focus on responding to content rather than form. You can of course make a note of common problems to deal with later on. By not correcting every error, you will hopefully encourage the students to become more confident in their ability to express themselves in writing.

After dealing with general comprehension of a reading text, give the students bilingual dictionaries and set a time limit. They have to choose which words they want to look up and learn. Stronger students will work more quickly and get through more words. Make sure everybody has looked up a minimum of three words, then get students to teach their words to their partner.

5.3.2 Asking Or Answering Questions

Question lists

These could be questions about anything and to practise any language. Give the students a long list. Within a time limit they have to answer as many as they can. The questions you want everyone to answer should be the first ones in the list, or, if the questions are in sections, ask the students to answer at least one from each section. The questions can become progressively more difficult. Here are some examples of questions in the present tense on personal information.

You and your family

What's your name? Have you got any brothers or sisters? If yes, what are their names?

How old are they?

School

Do you like school? Why or why not? What are your favourite subjects? Which subjects don't you like?

Daily routines

What time do you get up? What do you have for breakfast?

What time do you get home? What do you do after school?

What do you usually eat in the evening?

What are your favourite TV programmes?

What time do you go to bed in the week?

Holidays

Where do you usually go on holiday in the summer?

Who do you go with? How long do you spend there?

Wall crawl

A wall crawl is a reading task where students have a list of questions to answer using information that is displayed on the wall. This can be a mixture of visual and written information. It is good for livening up a reading activity and to practise the skill of scanning (reading for specific information). Set a time limit then, for checking, put students together who have answered approximately the same number of questions.

Find someone who ...

This is a mingling activity in which students stand up and go round asking questions to find someone who answers *yes* to their question. For example, to practise the present perfect for experience contrasted with the past simple:

Find someone who ...	Name	When? /Who?	/Where?
... has been to England			
... has ridden a horse			
... has broken a bone			

Everybody has to ask the question *Have you ever...?* to complete the name column. Weaker students may then just ask *Who?* Or *When?* and answer these questions with one word whereas stronger students should ask and answer in full.

5.3.3 Dictation And Questions

Dictate some words or phrases linked to a particular factual topic to the class one by one. As you dictate them, ask for volunteers to come up and write them on the board. Start with the most difficult ones as stronger students will volunteer first. No one is allowed to come up to the board more than once.

You should end up with a board like this:

<i>Washington DC</i>	<i>in San Francisco</i>	<i>red, blue and</i>
<i>white</i>		
<i>the Big Apple</i>	<i>5111 Clinton</i>	<i>the White House</i>
<i>on the east coast</i>	<i>dollars and cents</i>	<i>Hollywood</i> <i>yellow</i>

* Once the words are on the board, the students have to try to guess the question you are thinking of to elicit each answer. (Write down the questions you want to elicit first.) Once you have got the correct questions, drill them and tell the students they must try to remember them without writing them down. As they practise each question, rub the answer off the board and display the question on an overhead projector (or gradually reveal a poster).

* Turn off the overhead projector (or take down the poster). Then ask for volunteers to repeat the questions in turn. Another student must volunteer the answer and come and write it on the board once again.

* When all the answers are written up again tell the students that they now have to write the questions. They can work individually or in same-level groups. Stronger students who finish this task quickly go on to write more questions about the USA or to write a short paragraph.

(Described by Shelagh Deller at the APPI conference in Porto, April 1996.)

5.3.4 Responding To A Picture

Students have a picture and write around it words, expressions or phrases associated with it. This can be done to create interest in a reader or reading text, for example. To help them you can write in simple questions that they have to respond to. This can be done as an individual, pair or group activity.

5.3.5 Using Stories

Stories appeal to all ages and abilities and can continue to hold fascination even when they have been listened to or read many times over. You can exploit this by using stories in English that the students already know in their own language. A variety of tasks can be used to allow students to respond at their own level.

* Students listen to the story in English, perhaps told with the help of pictures or mime. Then they have to draw a picture of the story and write either words, sentences or a paragraph next to the picture to summarise the main points.

* Students listen to the story then in groups have to act out a scene. This can be mimed or acted with dialogue or mimed with a narrator telling the story.

* You start to tell the story but after a while you ask a question and the students have to write their response while you pause. The questions asked allow weaker students to respond with perhaps a single word while stronger students may write a sentence or more.

Example.

Using a story

Little Red Riding Hood

Once upon a *time* there was a girl called Little Red Riding Hood.

(What was Little Red Riding Hood Like?)

One day her mother said to her: 'Little Red Riding Hood, I want you to go and visit your grandmother. She's not very well so I'd like you to take her a basket of food' 'Yes, of course, mummy', said Little Red Riding Hood. So her mother prepared a basket of food. **(What did she put in it?)**

she put in it?)

Later that morning Little Red Riding Hood set off with her basket.

As she was walking through the forest singing she met the woodcutter,
then she met a stranger.

(What did he look Like?)

'Good morning, sir', she said brightly.

'Good morning, little girl', he said. 'And where are you going?' **(What did she reply?)**

'I see', he said.

'Good day, sir. I must hurry now'. And she set off walking.

The stranger ran off very fast, which she thought was odd.

Some time later she arrived at her grandmother's house. **(Describe the house.)**

That's funny', she thought. 'Why is the door open?' She pushed it gently
and saw her grandmother lying in bed, so in she went.

'Hello, grandmother. I've brought you some nice food'.

'Thank you, dear', replied the grandmother in a funny voice.

Little Red Riding Hood looked at her grandmother. She looked funny.

'Grandmother, what big eyes you've got'.

'All the better to see you with, my dear'.

'And what big ears you've got'.

(What did her grandmother reply?)

'And, my goodness, what big teeth you've got'.

'All the better to eat you with'. And grandmother jumped out of bed
and pulled off her nightcap and nightgown. It wasn't her grandmother
at all. It was a big ugly wolf.

(What did Little Red Riding Hood shout?)

At that moment the door burst open and in ran the woodcutter with his axe. When the wolf saw him, he was frightened and ran away.

(What did the woodcutter say to Little Red Riding Hood?)

Then they heard a noise coming from the cupboard - it was grandmother's voice.

(What did she say?)

They opened the cupboard. Grandmother was all right. So they all hugged each other then they sat down and ate the food that was in Little Red Riding Hood's basket. It was the last time any of them ever saw the wolf, too.

(Why? What happened to the wolf?)

And they all lived happily ever after.

There are various possible ways of following this.

- In mixed-level pairs or small groups students compare their responses to the questions, and produce a 'final version' for each one. Retell the story and elicits the response from each group. The whole class chooses the best one.
- Grouped according to their different levels, students write the story. Provide weaker students with a gapped text, middle-level ones with keywords while stronger ones write from scratch.

In mixed-level groups the students write the story or act it out.

5.3.6 Using Video

Video may be easier to understand than audio listening material because of the visual clues. It can therefore be very useful for mixed-ability classes, particularly building confidence in those students who find listening difficult.

Here are two tasks which allow open-ended responses.

- * Show the students a short video scene or part of a scene, preferably one in which there is quite a lot happening or a story developing. As they watch they write down as many words, expressions or sentences as occur to them. Elicit their ideas onto the board, nominating the weaker students first to contribute. You should end up with a board full of language notes. In mixed groups the students write a summary of the story so far, then act out a continuation.
- * Show the students a video sequence and give them some sentence beginnings which they have to complete. Again, this offers possibilities for very brief responses or more extended ones. In mixed level-groups the students compare and correct their responses.

5.3.7 Vocabulary Brainstorming

This can be done from a picture or from a topic title. Within a time limit students (individually or in pairs) write down as many words as they can associated with the picture or topic. Elicit ideas onto the board, nominating first the weaker students to answer. Check that everyone understands the meaning of the words, the part of speech and knows how to say them.

5.3.8 Poetry Writing

This procedure can be followed for a wide variety of topics. In terms of preparation you need to find a poem on a theme that you think will appeal to your students and that they will be able to understand quite easily. If you use authentic material such as the poem below there may be some language that is above their level: explain it in English or use L1. The appeal of this poem in fact is its simplicity, length, humour and the strong rhyme.

- Write the topic on the board, e.g. ducks.
- Now the students think individually about the topic and write down as many words or phrases associated with it as they can. If they don't know the words in English, they can write them in L1 or ask for help. If necessary, ask some questions to help them, e.g.

What do ducks look like?

Where do they live?

What noise do they make?

How do they move?

Are they serious or funny?

What stories do you know about ducks?

- Students now compare their ideas in pairs and add to their individual lists.
- Elicit from each pair two words or expressions and put them on the board so that the board is full of language. Feed in English words as necessary. You should have only English words written on the board. Read aloud the words and expressions as the students listen.
 - Tell the students to make up a short poem about ducks using any of the language on the board or that in their original list. This can be done individually or in pairs. Monitor and help as necessary. Weaker students will be able to rely totally on the language already given on the board whereas stronger ones may still add their own ideas.
 - Ask if anyone would like to read their poem out loud. It is probably best not to force anyone.
 - Show them the poem you found and read it out loud to them. Ask them how it compares to their own poem. Do comprehension work as necessary.

The poem below contains some unusual language but can easily be explained or illustrated. A good task might be to get the students to order some pictures, like the ones below.

The Duck

Behold the duck.

It does not cluck.

A cluck it lacks.

It quacks.

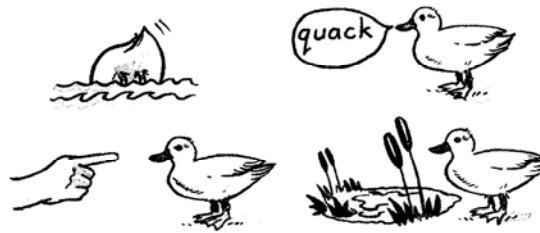
It is specially fond

Of a puddle or a pond.

When it dines or sups,

It bottoms ups.

(From *The Rattle Bag*, eds. Heaney S. and Hughes 1., Faber and Faber, 1982.)



5.3.9 Music

You can use music in the same way as a visual stimulus. AUDITORY LEARNERS may be more responsive to this in feet.

- Give the students a list of questions to think about as they listen to a piece of music. This should be instrumental, i.e. without lyrics. Tell them it is OK to write some things in L1 if they don't know how to say them in English.

Close your eyes and listen to this piece of music. Answer these questions in as much detail as possible. Where are you? What can you smell around you? What can you hear? How do you feel? What can you see?

Now listen again. Some people are in your scene. How many people are there? What do they look like? Who are they? What are they doing? How are they feeling? They are talking. What are they talking about?

- After they have listened enough times to answer the questions the students compare their ideas in groups. They can also help each other with how to say things in English. You can monitor and help too. Then ask the students to act out a scene to go with the music. This can be with or without dialogue.

5.3.10 Student Presentations

Students can be asked to do a presentation to the class at some time during the year. This can take different forms:

... a talk, with or without accompanying visuals (slides, photos, etc.)

... a poster presentation

... a demonstration followed by questions from the audience.

Since the format and content is flexible students can respond at their own level. The topic should be chosen by the student but should be something related to him or herself, e.g. a hobby or a personal experience. If students are doing this for the first time, it may be better for them to work in small groups.

5.4 Dealing With Different Learning Speeds

One of the problems that mixed-ability classes present for the teacher is that the students do not work at the same speed. Some take longer to understand and learn a new language point, or to do a practice activity or task, than others. If you work at the speed of the faster learners, the slower ones get left behind; if, on the other hand, you slow down to the pace of the slower learners, the stronger ones get bored and demotivated. If you go for the middle ground, you may end up catering for nobody! It is important to find a balance and clear strategies for ensuring that stronger students are not held back or challenged insufficiently, and that weaker students have enough time to do the essential work. In other words, you have to try and cater simultaneously for different learning speeds in the class. (Tice ; 1997)

5.4.1 Course Content

As with any class, it is essential to plan work ahead. To begin with, you should have a overview of the year's objectives and the work to be covered. This information should be evident from the syllabus or, if you have no clearly defined syllabus, you will need to agree objectives and content with colleagues who are teaching the same level(s).

This then needs to be broken down into termly and perhaps half-termly objectives and content to enable you to plan ahead in manageable chunks.

Identify your syllabus

Depending on how your syllabus is organised, you need to identify how you will meet the objectives through, e.g.

- CORE LANGUAGE input, new structures and vocabulary

- core topics and tasks

- core skills work, e.g. subskills of the four skills to be covered

- core extensive reading

- core learning behaviours.

'Core' refers to what is essential to achieving the objectives, i.e. work that needs to be done by everybody. Bear in mind, too, the obligatory assessment procedures used; if there are written tests at the end of the term, you will need to spend some time preparing students for these, although they shouldn't influence you so much so that you end up only doing exam preparation.

If you look at your coursebook, you will no doubt find that it contains more than enough work for the hours you have available. You may also find that not all of the language input and tasks are essential because they do not relate to the core input you have identified. Next to each core item on your syllabus write down the coursebook reference. Thus you will have selected the essential objectives and material for the term or half term.

Identify remedial work necessary

The next step is to consider what is essential **previous** knowledge for these objectives to be met. If your students are complete beginners — or assumed to be - this is not a problem. If, however, they are going into their second or third year of English, you need to identify any language items or skills that are essential background to the new core objectives for this year. You also need to note any materials references; perhaps there are activities in your coursebook or workbook which are suitable for this remedial work, or you may have to go to other supplementary sources.

Identify extra work

Thirdly, you need to think about extra work that can complement the core syllabus. It is essential that optional areas for extra study do not eat into the next block of core course work. If stronger students are allowed to race ahead with core course content, the problem of mixed ability just gets worse from term to term. So make sure the stronger students learn 'extra' things, not future core coursework. Again, note references to materials from the coursebook, workbook, supplementary materials and readers.

Assess the students

By now you have a three-part work plan: remedial, core and extra work. You will need to find out if your students - and which ones - actually need to do the remedial work. You can find this out by a test, or a number of MINI CHECKTESTS at the beginning of the year, or by setting tasks in class or for homework, or by a combination of these. As a general principle, it is probably not a good idea to begin the year with a lot of revision (especially if you don't even know if all the students need it) because it can bore the stronger students and further demotivate weaker students who see it as more of the same!

Inform the students

Give the students a copy or a simplified version of the document you have produced.

Give them the remedial work list before the core work list for this year.

This can provide a basis for:

... self assessment and a first individual counselling session

... choosing work for the first self-access sessions

... choosing homework.

The core work list can be used on an ongoing basis throughout the block of work: students can tick off areas as they cover them, evaluate their progress and refer back to the list for ongoing revision purposes.

The list of extra work will be most useful for the stronger students but should be given to everybody to avoid students feeling labelled as weak. You should make it clear that once the students are confident that they have learned what is listed on the remedial and core work lists, they can do work on this for homework, or in self-access sessions.

Students will obviously need training in using these checklists. Explaining the rationale, allocating class time to learner training generally and individual counselling sessions will help students take on this responsibility. Initially you may need to intervene if you see that students are seriously over- or underestimating their abilities.

Opposite is an example of a low-level remedial work checklist which focuses on areas of language knowledge and particular tasks that the students need to be able to do in the four skills.

YOU SHOULD ALREADY BE ABLE TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

Speaking

count from 1 to 20

identify colours

name ten classroom objects

give some basic personal information about yourself

identify members of your family

say the letters of the alphabet

Listening

understand simple questions about yourself and your family

write words as they are spelt out to you

follow instructions to colour a simple picture

Reading

match simple sentences to a picture of a classroom

identify true and false sentences about colours in a picture of a classroom

read a simple description of a family and match it to a picture

Writing

complete a form in English giving personal information

write a few sentences about yourself and your family

spell numbers 1-20, colours, classroom objects, family members correctly

Depending on the age and level of your students, the core work checklists can be more or less detailed. Whatever the level, it is a good idea to have them written in English, although you will need to check that all students understand what the terms refer to. Here is an example of a simple core work checklist.

BY THE END OF THIS TERM YOU SHOULD KNOW:	YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
Structures to be have got present simple	Speaking/listening ask and answer questions about a family describe a person identify people on a photograph of a family from listening to a description draw a picture of a person as you listen to a description ask and answer questions about your daily routine listen to someone talking about their daily routine and fill in a chart ask and say what time it is
Vocabulary classroom objects jobs illnesses physical descriptions of people	Reading/writing read a description of a family and match it to a family tree read short descriptions of people and match them to pictures

family daily routines the time	write short descriptions of people in a picture write a short paragraph about you and your family read a short description of someone's routine and identify their job write a description of your daily routine write a description of the daily routine of another person in your family
--------------------------------------	---

5.4.2 Whole-Class Stages Of The Lesson

Although we have seen that Individual work, pair and groupwork are very useful in the mixed-ability class, there will be some points at which the class will be working together with the teacher at the front, e.g.

... a teacher-led presentation of a new language point

... checking an exercise

... creating interest and brainstorming ideas prior to a skills-work activity.

The main aim here is to involve the stronger students as much as possible and make sure they do not get bored and to give the weaker students enough time and opportunities to understand and not get left behind.

Presenting new language

- Elicit as much as you can from the stronger students to involve them and let them model the new language rather than doing it all the time yourself.
- Encourage peer correction.
- Insist on good pronunciation, particularly from the stronger students.
- Keep the presentation lively, fun and well-paced.
- Split the class if it becomes evident that the weaker students need a bit more oral practice; let the other students get on with a practice task individually or in pairs while you spend a little more time with part of the class.

- If it is evident that some students are not grasping the language, don't go on and on. Feeling embarrassed or stupid only creates further learning blocks. Move on to the practice activity where things may suddenly fall into place.

Checking an exercise

- It is not always productive to check through every classwork / homework exercise orally in class as this can slow the pace of your class and be a real waste of time for the students. Instead, they can check in mixed-level pairs or use a written key while you monitor to answer any specific questions or problems from students who had difficulties.

If you do sometimes check through an exercise with the whole class:

... nominate weaker students to answer easier questions

... involve stronger students in explaining rather than doing it yourself

... don't let it go on too long: if some students have more questions, answer them later when the rest of the class is working on something else.

Creating interest and brainstorming ideas

Allow thinking time: once you have established the theme and elicited a few ideas from the whole class, give the students time to think of more ideas individually or in pairs. Then elicit further ideas from the class, nominating the weaker students first.

- If stronger students say things which you think the weaker ones may not understand, get them to explain or paraphrase.

5.4.3 Fast Finishers

Within any class and particularly a very mixed-level class it is inevitable that learners will take different amounts of time to complete the work set in class. Students who finish first may become restless or even disruptive if they are left doing nothing. This is also a waste of valuable learning time. It is therefore very important that you have a range of strategies to deal with fast finishers.

If you are using some of the options we have looked at such as graded tasks, self access, different responses or open-ended activities, then you should have fewer problems with fast finishers. However, when the whole class is doing the same activity (which at some point they will need to), there is likely to be a greater problem with students completing tasks at different times.

Also, bear in mind that it may not always be the stronger students who finish first.

Checking work

This is the first thing fast finishers should be encouraged to do.

- Fast finishers should be encouraged to check their own work. They may have error checklists to help them to do this.
- Look at their work and tell them how many mistakes there are, without telling them what they are or where they are. They have to then try and find them.
- They can check their work with another student who has also finished. If the task is one in which there are right and wrong answers, and there are differences, they can try and work out who is right. If the task is a freer exercise they can look for any errors in each other's work.

Helping other students

You can ask fast finishers to go and help students who have not finished or who are finding the task difficult. This promotes co-operation between learners. It is important that right from the beginning you foster a sense of support and cooperation among learners rather than competition or resentment.

Extension activities

It may be possible to extend some activities. Here are some ideas.

Reading comprehension

If students have been answering questions about a text, they could:

- ... write some more questions
- ... do another task which asks them to react to the text in some way, e.g. say if they liked the story and why
- ... draw a picture to go with it
- ... supply a different ending
- ... imagine the conversation between two people in the text
- ... say what they think happened next
- ... choose some words from the text to look up in their dictionaries
- ... write definitions for some of the words in the text and test other fast finishers.

Grammar exercises

If they have been doing an exercise to practise a specific structure, they could:

- ... write some more simple examples
- ... practise saying the sentences to another fast finisher (to practise pronunciation).

Writing

If they have written a paragraph about something, they could:

- ... write a little bit more
- ... write another one.

Vocabulary

If they have been doing some work on vocabulary on a particular topic, they could:

... think of more words associated with the topic in L1, then find out what they are in English (in a bilingual/picture dictionary)

... practise saying the words to another fast finisher to practise pronunciation

... do a specific pronunciation activity, e.g. group the words according to the number of syllables or where the stress is, or identify which words contain a particular sound.

Speaking

If they have been doing a pairwork speaking activity, they could:

... do it again (e.g. if it's a dialogue) in a different mood, sounding happy, angry, sad, bored, etc.

... write it down

... do it again, giving different answers to the questions (if it is a question and answer activity).

Listening comprehension

If they have been completing a task after a listening activity, they could:

... read through the tapescript

... write down any new words from the tapescript

... read the tapescript aloud in pairs.

Additional exercises

Most courses have more than enough work to get through in a year. Fast finishers can therefore do exercises that you have not had time to do with the whole class, especially those exercises from the part of the book you have already covered and know you won't want to use with the class. It is ideal if the book has a key so that students can check their own work. If it doesn't, they can check with another student. If they have any specific questions, they can ask you or make a note of them to ask later. It is important that you spend more time monitoring the work that the other students are still doing.

Some coursebooks nowadays have a special section of extra tasks for fast finishers and these are clearly ideal. You can also of course make use of the extra work checklist and ask students to select something from this to do.

Workcards/sheets

Have a collection of laminated workcards/sheets or photocopies of different exercises with you in your lessons. These could be taken from the self-access centre. Fast finishers can be given an activity, e.g. a crossword or other word puzzle to do while the other students are finishing off.

Readers

Fast finishers can get on with their reader. If you are doing one reader with the whole class, encourage stronger students to choose an additional reader from the self-access centre which they can read on their own at times like these.

5.4.4 Homework

- Homework is important in any class but particularly so in mixed-ability classes. It is an ideal opportunity for slower students to catch up and an opportunity for stronger students who work quickly to do extra tasks.

The usual homework procedure used by teachers is to set the same task for everyone. In fact, the idea of the whole class doing the same homework is based on the assumption of a LOCKSTEP system of teaching or assessment (which assumes that everyone is learning the same things at the same rate). It is also easier for the teacher, in terms of selecting tasks to set and in terms of marking or giving feedback.

However, from the point of view of making the most of homework with a mixed-ability class, certain problems arise. It may:

- ... be too difficult for some students and too easy for others
- ... take some students a long time to do and others no time at all
- ... not be the most useful thing for everybody.

Tie homework in with core work and plan ahead

- * Homework tasks that everybody has to do should tie in with the core work you have outlined for the term.
- * Try to ensure that homework tasks are fair, i.e. don't set tasks that you know all but the strongest students will do badly. You need to make sure you have done some learner training activities for homework tasks so that all learners are aware of suitable strategies to use. This means that it is important to plan what you will set for homework ahead of time.
- * If some homework tasks are tied in with CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT, it might be a good idea to set these tasks ahead of time and allow the students to complete them when they - and you - think they are ready to do so. This can be discussed in individual counselling sessions.

Have some homework tasks that students can work on together

You can encourage students to work on some homework tasks together: there is no reason why homework should always be done individually.

Set time limits

You should set a minimum amount of time per week that should be spent on English homework. This could be agreed in a class contract at the beginning of the year. Students should be encouraged to keep a section of their notebook as a homework record in which they note down how much time they have spent on their homework and what they did.

You will need to look at the students' homework records. Students who are completing tasks quickly and well need to be encouraged to do more. You can use your 'extra work*' checklist to direct students to additional tasks.

Sometimes students may be doing the work quickly but not very well: in that case you need to advise them on how to check their work carefully.

Students who are spending too long on the homework need to be made aware of this too. Try to find out why they are taking so long; it could be that they do not have a quiet place to work at home, for example.

Give the students a choice sometimes

In the same way that it is a good idea to allocate some class time to individual needs via self-access sessions, it is a good idea to allocate some homework time to this, too. Everyone should be told to refer to their lesson summary sheets and to the core work checklists to ensure they are up to date with what they are supposed to know. Stronger students can then choose to do work from their extra work checklists while weaker students can spend it on remedial work or revision of core work. Make sure they keep records of what they have done.

CHAPTER 6

6. ASSESMENT

Many teachers are worried about the question of assessment, particularly when it comes to mixed-ability classes. We will look at when and how students can be assessed.

6.1 Assessing At The Beginning Of The Year

You may or may not be given information about students coming into your class. If not, you will certainly want to find out something about their language level to see whether you are dealing with a very mixed-level class or not. If you have been given assessment records, for example, it is probably still a good idea to gather some information yourself to complement this.

You may want information about:

- ... their knowledge of grammar
- ... their knowledge of vocabulary
- ... their ability in listening
- ... their ability in reading
- ... their ability in writing
- ... their ability in speaking.

In general terms you need to know if they are at the right level to begin the new year's work.

In addition you will want information about:

- ... their behaviour in class
- ... their motivation
- ... their learning style
- ... their awareness of effective learning strategies
- ... their interests and strengths in other areas.

We have discussed ideas for gathering information about these things throughout this study.

You can find out about their language level in the following ways.

Give them a formal test

Make up a test yourself or (preferably) with the help of colleagues. Alternatively, you may be able to use published test, perhaps one from the end of the previous year's coursebook.

You may want to include sections on grammar and vocabulary, a reading comprehension, a listening comprehension and a writing task. A formal speaking test is more difficult to administer with a large class, although this could be done in small groups while the rest of the students are

working on their own. You could ask the students being tested to carry out a short ROLEPLAY or a task in which they have to find out information from the other students by asking questions.

The test content should aim to assess whether students are at the required level for the beginning of this year. That is, it should test those language items and skills that you identified as things the students should already be able to do before beginning on the new year's work.

Give them a series of MINI CHECKTESTS corresponding to their remedial work list.

You could give students some choice over these. Give them the remedial work checklist first and get them to identify the two areas they are most confident about and the two they are least confident about. Then get them to do the corresponding MINI CHECKTESTS. It will be evident if they have seriously over- or underestimated their abilities from the results they get.

Test them informally through different classroom activities

Observe and keep a note of how students perform in different activities that you use. You will need to monitor their work carefully. Pay attention to any students you think may be particularly weak or strong to check your impression. This will take longer than giving a formal test but may give you a fairer picture of each student in the end.

A combination of the two approaches above is probably best.

If you discover that some students are extremely weak, and really not up to the level in any area, perhaps because they suffer from particular learning disadvantages such as hearing or sight problems or come from very disadvantaged backgrounds, then you need to see whether it is possible to put them in a special class for tuition or organise extra classes for them.

If these solutions are not possible, you will have to try to at least give them extra remedial work to do. You will need to give them guidance (via checklists and individual counselling) about what exactly they need to do. You should be able to provide them with materials and resources from the self-access collection for this.

If you find that some students are very strong (for example, bilingual children), then it is also worth exploring the possibility of different classes so that they are not held back. If this is not feasible or allowed within your school system, you will need to provide extra work for these students to challenge them appropriately. Students like this should be regarded as an asset to the class, not as a threat to you. Take advantage of their knowledge! Again, the use of checklists with extra study areas and tasks listed, individual counselling and library or self-access resources will be useful.

Individual counselling

As soon as possible in the year, you should try to have an individual counselling session with all the students. This offers opportunities for:

... getting to know the students

- ... showing them you are aware of them as individuals and concerned about their progress
- ... involving them in self evaluation and assessment
- ... motivating them
- ... advising them
- ... checking their work, homework records, etc.
- ... answering individual questions.

Explaining assessment procedures

You also need to introduce students to the assessment criteria that will be used during the year, e.g.

- ... how often will formal tests take place?
- ... what form will continuous assessment take?
- ... what criteria will you use in assessing students' work?

You may need to explain some of this in L1, particularly when explaining the rationale behind the assessment procedures. You should show them examples of criteria used in the assessment of different kinds of work, e.g. written work, oral work or groupwork (behaviour, etc.).

Here is an example.

GROUPWORK			
	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
Uses English as much as possible			
Takes an active role in discussion			
Listens to others			
Gets on well with other group members			
Carries out tasks as allocated by group			
Overall comment:			

You may need to introduce the students to the idea of self evaluation and assessment if they have not done this before. Again, you can show them what they will use for this, e.g. self-access record sheets

6.2 Testing Throughout The Year

You need to keep track of students' progress and achievement throughout the year. This is probably best done through a mixture of formal testing and CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT. The following points are of particular relevance to mixed-ability classes.

Record-keeping

- It is essential that both you and the students keep a record of work they have covered. For example, if you have used graded tasks, you should know which level of difficulty was done each time. It was suggested before that colour coding is the best way of doing this. Similarly, with self-access activities, records should be kept of what students have done.

Counselling

- Individual counselling should be carried out. Students can contribute to this if they have been asked to keep records of work and evaluate their own performance as a matter of course (e.g. at the end of lessons, blocks of work, after self-access activities). Counselling can take place during self-access sessions or outside class time.

Checking progress

Students (and you) need to know where they are in terms of:

- * their own progress. Have they improved since the beginning of the year?
- * the standard expected of a class at this level. Are they weak, average or very strong for the level? It does not matter where they are in relation to the other students in the class and you should not focus on this since it can discourage those 'at the bottom' and make those 'at the top' complacent.
- * Students need to know in which areas they are weak and need to improve (language, skills, behaviours). They should be given help and guidance on how to do this. If this is written down as a follow-up to an individual counselling session it can be referred back to and you and the student can see if the suggested action was taken and, if so, if it was successful.

Assessment records

Assessment records should be as complete as possible with references to different language skills, effort, progress and levels of achievement, e.g.

Student record	
Name	
Date	
Comment on effort, progress and achievement.	
Grammar	<i>Some difficulties with accuracy work</i>
Vocabulary	<i>Good. Wide range.</i>
Listening	<i>Very good.</i>
Speaking	<i>Fluency good - still needs to work on pronunciation.</i>
Reading	<i>Good.</i>
Writing	<i>Tends to be careless. Has made an effort to check work before handing in.</i>
	<i>needs to work on this.</i>
Participation/ behaviour	<i>Co-operative and willing to contribute.</i>
Learning skills	<i>needs to discipline himself to check work, use dictionary more.</i>
Test results/ continuous assessment	<i>Disappointing on grammar checktests and writing.</i>
	<i>Good on listening/speaking.</i>
Homework	<i>Careless at times, but generally does it.</i>
General	<i>Doing fine for the level. Needs to work on accuracy.</i>

Formal tests

Formal tests can be designed to cater for mixed ability by:

- including progressively more difficult tasks so that the stronger students who work faster will be increasingly challenged.
- having within each section of the test an optional extra task so that students who have completed the 'core' test can go on to choose which extra parts to do, depending on the extra study areas they have completed on their learning checklist.
- having one extra task at the end.
- designing different tests for different levels within the class.

This final option is perhaps the least satisfactory since it involves considerably more work for the teacher.

Mini checktests

- MINI CHECKTESTS are very useful with a mixed-ability class. These are short tests which focus on discrete language items or particular tasks from the syllabus, e.g. one might test the students' ability to form questions in the present simple, another test a particular lexical set through

a read-and-draw activity. You can write your own MINI CHECKTESTS or use exercises from grammar books or the students' workbook. They can be stored with the self-access materials and students can choose which ones to do. These should be colour-coded according to level of difficulty, and should also relate to core or extra study sections of the checklists provided. Use the same colour coding system as for graded tasks and self-access materials. Students can choose when they want to do one and they can also be redone at a later stage for remedial or revision purposes. You will need to provide answer keys.

Continuous assessment

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT can be used in conjunction with formal tests. This means that coursework throughout the year counts as much as results in a special end-of-term or end-of-year test.

One form of CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT that works well with mixed-ability classes is this:

- Define at the beginning of the term a number of tasks related to core work that students will need to carry out successfully.
- Give students a list of these and give them a final date by which they must do them, but tell them that they can do them before if they feel ready.
- Let them have another go at the task if they do not complete it satisfactorily the first time. In this way it becomes a learning as well as testing tool.

6.3 Testing At The End Of The Year

In most school systems there is one test that all students in a class must do in order to pass satisfactorily to the next level. This makes no concessions to mixed-ability classes. Those students who have not reached the required standard as reflected in the test will inevitably do worse. However, this may not be as demotivating as it can be if the student:

... knows where he/she stands already in terms of level, through self evaluation, CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT and counselling,

... has had recognition for effort and progress over the year in the teacher's assessment.

CONCLUSION

In the introduction, we described the term 'mixed ability' as referring to a variety of types of differences among our learners. Then we saw that there is not one easy answer to the question *How should I deal with my mixed-ability group?* This is what has been covered in thesis.

We looked at problems created by mixed-ability classes. We will see now if we can suggest solutions to those problems. The first problem was *'Half the students have finished an exercise when the other half have only just begun.'*

The use of graded tasks here would help . If stronger students are given more challenging work to do, it is less likely that they will finish quickly. Open-ended activities also allow students to respond at their own level and should keep stronger students occupied. Fast finishers should be set extra tasks, never just left doing nothing. Secondly we said that the stronger students get bored if I spend time explaining to the weaker ones

You can get the stronger students involved by getting them to explain: making sure that all students are involved is part of good classroom management . You also need to pace whole-class teacher-led stages carefully . Or have the students doing different things in the class: while you spend time 'teaching' a group of weaker students, the stronger students can be doing another task from the self-access centre . Another problem was *'We've got a syllabus to get through but most of the students are already behind.'*

Planning your core coursework is essential and it is important that you do not begin every year with remedial work that not everybody needs. You do, however, need to cater for those students who are behind by drawing up remedial checklists , identifying gaps in the students' knowledge and providing opportunities for them to work on these areas in, e.g. extra classes, self-access slots and homework tasks.

One more problem was the domination of stronger students. Once again, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to participate is part of good classroom management. Ensure that weaker learners have the opportunity to contribute in whole-class stages by asking them easier questions. Individual work, group and pairwork may be less threatening for quieter or weaker students. The use of graded tasks , self-access , content teaching , different responses and open-ended activities encourage and provide opportunities for all students to contribute.

We see the weaker students sit at the back and start disrupting the lesson. Good classroom management skills, the use of different groupings and interaction patterns and good lesson planning in terms of appropriate and varied task design should prevent this.

As we know the weaker student don't even try. Motivation is crucial . Providing tasks which are achievable encourages students to try. Recognising effort and progress is also an important factor.

Sometimes as teachers we don't know where to pitch my lesson.

If you are working to a syllabus, then basically you have to deal with the language and skills that appear on it. You can adapt particular tasks to suit different levels of ability. Self access also allows students to work on different tasks at an appropriate level. In LOCKSTEP stages of the lesson make sure that you cater for all levels by making sure everyone is involved.

One of the most serious problem was/ is that the weaker students are always asking me things in their own language and want everything explained in it.

You need to vary your approach to cater for different learning styles . By doing this you may discourage students from needing to have things explained. Insist that the students use English as much as possible. Raising their awareness of good learning strategies helps and also their awareness of the assessment criteria . You also need to ensure your language is well graded .

Some of the weaker students try so hard but they l get bad marks. Recognition of effort and progress is as important as achievement. This must be included in any evaluation of them.

When we are doing pair or groupwork we don't know whether it's better to put strong and weak students together or put students of the same level in the groups. There is no one right answer to this. It depends on the activity and the stage of the activity .

One problem we expressed at the beginning was about students' written home work.

If weaker students have been given no guidance, this is not surprising. Train students in error awareness and encourage them to check and correct their own and each other's work, using error checklists and reference books. They need to be aware of the assessment criteria you use. With freer, open-ended writing tasks, responding to the content and reformulation is more appropriate than correcting errors overtly.

Good students should be regarded as a positive influence, not a threat. Get them on your side and give them credit for being good. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't be afraid to say so, but promise to find out. If you have reference books available in the class (which is often a good idea), then get the students to look the answer up.

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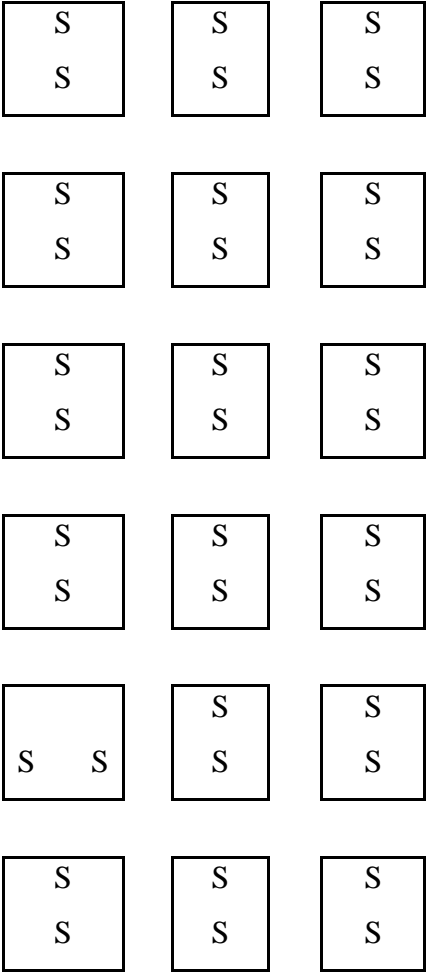
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FIGURES



BOARD

Figure 1

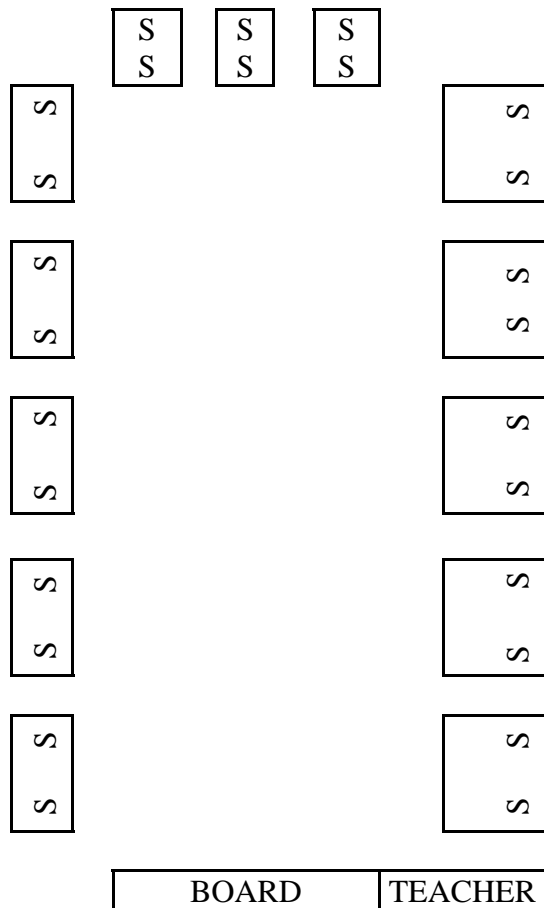


Figure 2 (Richardson, 1967)

How do you say these things in your language? How do you say them in English? Use the word box to help you.



taxi	pizza	hotel	café	hamburger	football	TV	video	radio
stop	telephone	Coca-Cola	CD	chocolate	rock	music		

Figure 3

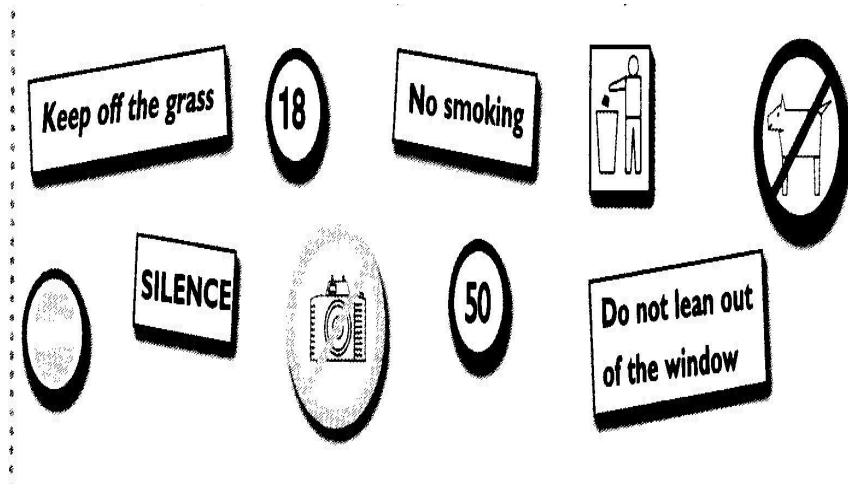


Figure: 4

Class Survey

<p>Find out how many of us have sisters.</p> <p>Find out how many of us have brothers.</p> <p>Find out how many of us have pets.</p> <p>Find out how many of us have computers.</p> <p>Find out how many of us have bicycles.</p> <p>Find out how many of us can swim.</p> <p>Find out how many of us can ride a horse.</p> <p>Find out how many of us can dive.</p> <p>Find out how many of us can rollerskate.</p> <p>Find out how many of us play a musical instrument.</p> <p>Find out how many of us like hamburgers.</p> <p>Find out how many of us like vegetables.</p> <p>Find out how many of us like fish.</p> <p>Find out how many of us like milk.</p> <p>Find out how many of us like coffee.</p> <p>Find out how many of us walk to school.</p> <p>Find out how many of us go to bed after eleven o'clock.</p> <p>Find out how many of us watch TV every day.</p> <p>Find out how many of us get up before seven o'clock.</p> <p>Find out how many of us talk in our sleep.</p>

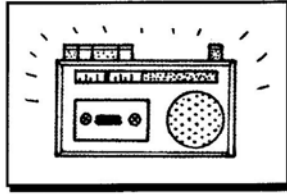
Figure 5

How we like to learn English

Write *yes*, *no* or *sometimes* under each picture.



in groups



listening to cassettes



seeing new words



doing tests



reading books



practising pronunciation



doing and making things



alone



hearing new words



doing projects



acting



writing



doing grammar exercises
in the book



speaking in pairs
or groups

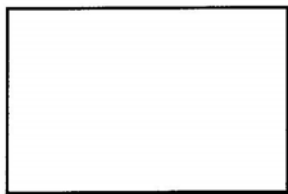


listening to the
teacher

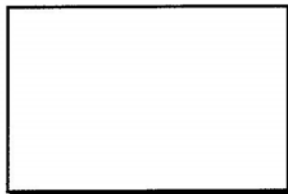


watching videos and
answering questions

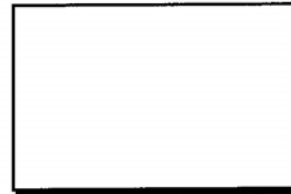
Now write and draw three more things: one you always like doing, one you sometimes like doing and you **don't** like doing.



yes



sometimes



no

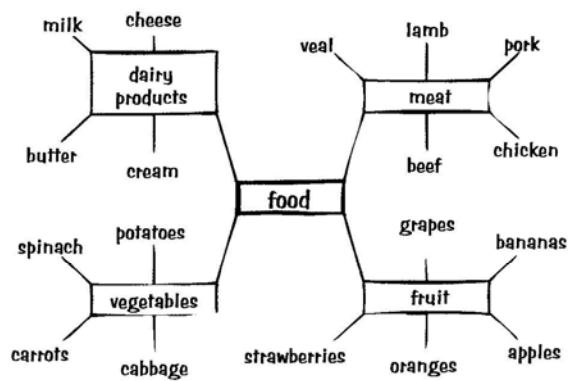
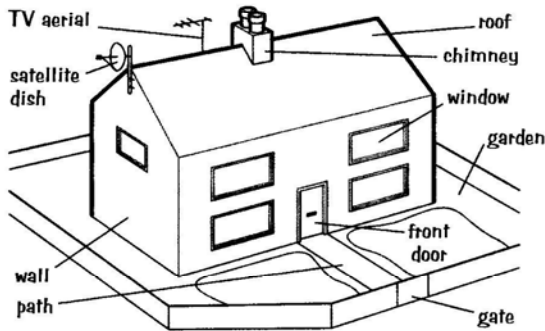
Figure 6

Recording and remembering vocabulary

Here are some different ways of making vocabulary notes.

Place	What you do
<i>cinema</i>	<i>see a film</i>
<i>chemist's</i>	<i>buy medicine</i>
<i>bank</i>	<i>get money</i>
<i>disco</i>	<i>go dancing</i>
<i>theatre</i>	<i>see a play</i>
<i>garage</i>	<i>buy petrol</i>

Word	LI	Sentence
hot (adj.)	It's very hot in summer.
sunny (adj.)	It's sunny today.
cloud (n)	Clouds are white or grey.
snow (v)	It snows in the winter.
rain (v)	It rains a lot in the north.



Word	Opposite
expensive	cheap
beautiful	ugly
thick	thin
funny	serious
strong	weak

Topic: cows

Cows are farm animals.
A baby cow is a calf.

We eat some cows - the meat is beef.

Word	Picture	Sentence
long hair		She's got long hair.
curly hair		She's got curly hair.
a beard		He's got a beard.
bald		He's bald

Figure 7

Summary of my work Name: _____ Level: _____ Dates from: _____ to: _____	
Language areas we have covered: vocabulary grammar	How good am I at this now?
Skills work we have done: speaking listening reading writing
Learning skills we have practised: using a dictionary using error checklist using classroom language using the self-access materials other
How have I behaved in class?	
How I completed all the homework?	
What do I need to do to improve?	

Figure 8

Self-access record

Date	What I plan to do in self access	Why	What I did in self access (and time spent)	Student comment	Teacher comment

Figure 9

Date	What I plan to do in self access	Why	What I did in self access (and time spent)	Student comment	Teacher comment
20/10	Listening Unit 4 Ex 3 in coursebook	Listening we did in class was difficult for me	Listening Unit 4 Ex 3 (15 mins) Vocabulary ex on professions (1.3) (10 mins)	Listening was easier - I need to do more I got the vocab ex right.	Keep up the listening practice - try a video next time? Well done with the vocabulary.
4/11	Video number 5	More listening practice	Video number 5 (20 mins) Started playing Scrabble.	It was fun but it was easy.	Let me help you choose a video next time.

Figure 10

Snakes and ladders

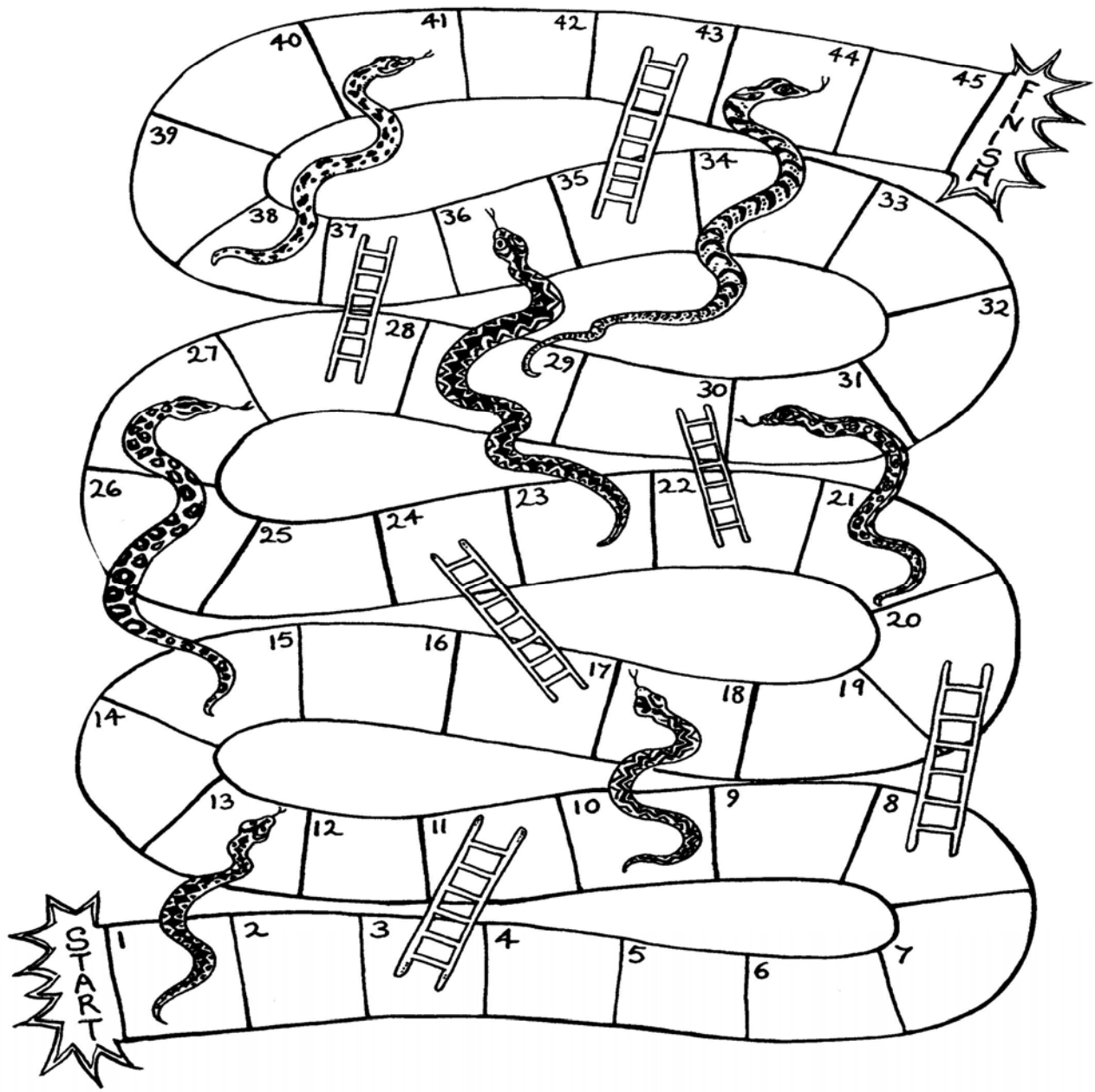


Figure 11

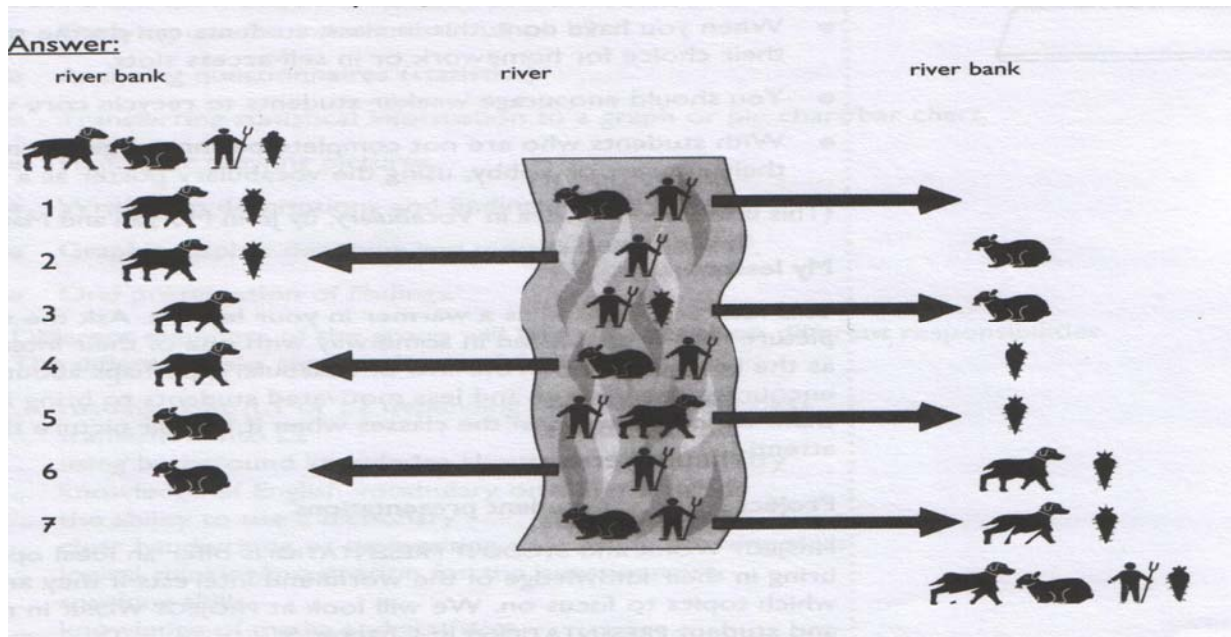


Figure 12

Students' interests













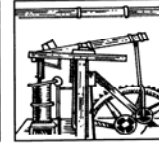




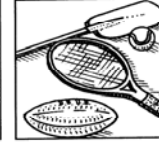
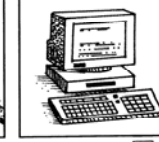
Write a number (1-4) next to each of the following topics.

1 = you are very interested in it.

3 = you are not very interested.

2 = you are quite interested.

4 = you are not at all interested.

 fashion <input type="checkbox"/>	 pop music <input type="checkbox"/>	 football <input type="checkbox"/>	 pets <input type="checkbox"/>	 1492 history <input type="checkbox"/>
 famous people <input type="checkbox"/>	 the environment <input type="checkbox"/>	 wild animals <input type="checkbox"/>	$a^2 - b^2 = (a+b)(a-b)$ mathematics <input type="checkbox"/>	 kings and queens <input type="checkbox"/>
 how people live in different countries <input type="checkbox"/>	 cookery <input type="checkbox"/>	 science <input type="checkbox"/>	 inventions <input type="checkbox"/>	 geography <input type="checkbox"/>
 explorers and discoverers <input type="checkbox"/>	 stars and planets <input type="checkbox"/>	 cities in the world <input type="checkbox"/>	 sport <input type="checkbox"/>	 technology <input type="checkbox"/>

Write down three more topics that you are interested in.

Figure 13

Project work: planning, progress and evaluation

Planning project work Group members: Project:		
Planning What we need to do 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Who	Action/materials needed
Progress What we have done 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Comment	
Evaluation Did the group work well together? What was difficult? Did I take an active part? What did I learn from this project? Did I use as much English as possible? What do I need to do to improve? What did I find easy?		
Comment on the final project:		

Figure 14