ENGLISH TEACHING
FORUM

KENDRA STALEY, CAROLYN ALLEN, AND ANNA HAMP

United States

Case Studies in ESP Course Development: Medical English for Turkmen and Mexican Medical Specialists

Teaching English for specific purposes (ESP), such as Medical English, is especially impactful due to high student motivation and immediate real-world application. Medical professionals devote their careers to improving the health and lives of others. With English-language skills, medical professionals can further their own professional development by attending international conferences, reading journals, and sharing their own discoveries with peers. In fact, as the majority of medical journals and international conferences utilize English, learning the language allows professionals who are nonnative English speakers to acquire medical terminology and be active in their community (Popa 2013; Chia et al. 1999). The benefits of teaching a Medical English ESP course are far-reaching and positively affect an unknown number of people. For instance, working with doctors and nurses to increase their English level enables them to more accurately interact with, diagnose, and treat their patients.

This article details the history behind the creation and adaptation of a Medical English course for two different student populations, countries, and needs: Turkmen medical specialists and Mexican Navy cadets. Additionally, a description of the curriculum and materials design highlights the topics, texts, materials, activities, and assessments of this ESP course. The article concludes by explaining modifications, student feedback, and future implications. Included are sample activities incorporating the four skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), along with grammar and vocabulary; the activities can easily be modified for other English as a second/

foreign language (ESL/EFL) professionals teaching Medical English.

Three authors offer their perspectives on this course: Kendra Staley as curriculum developer and instructor, Carolyn Allen as program manager, and Anna Hamp as materials developer and instructor. While this program was designed for medical practitioners, English teaching professionals can address ESP needs in their own contexts by following best practices of scaffolding activities, adapting materials for the needs of each particular student population, and incorporating feedback into curricular revisions.

**The benefits of teaching a Medical English ESP course
are far-reaching and positively affect
an unknown number of people.**

BACKGROUND

This Medical English course began as a secondary project with the English Language (EL) Fellow program in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, in 2017. EL Fellows often engage in projects that reflect diplomatic partnerships between the U.S. Embassy and local governments. In this case, the Turkmen Ministry of Health recognized that its medical specialists desired to improve their English-language abilities in order to better interact with international patients during the Asian Olympic Games in September 2017 and to continue their own training as medical professionals.

Because of that, EL Fellow Staley developed the course based on the abovementioned student needs. This particular student population consisted of 30 Turkmen medical specialists, such as doctors, nurses, and surgeons, ranging in age from late 20s to 50s. In addition to their own medical practice, these specialists trained others in their fields, often traveling around Turkmenistan to lead professional-development workshops for their peers and attending additional trainings outside the country, such as in Germany, Russia, and Japan, as well as those given by visiting medical specialists to Turkmenistan. The Turkmen specialists' English-language levels ranged from beginner to intermediate, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages descriptors (CEFR A2–B2), and their ESP course was 1.5 hours per week, for an approximate total of 30 hours of classroom instruction. Clearly, when creating and adapting their own courses, ESP materials developers and instructors take the following considerations into account: student needs, age, professional experience, education level, and English-language level, along with class time and length of the course.

After completing a ten-month fellowship in Turkmenistan, Staley returned to the United States to work at the International English Center (IEC) at the University of Colorado (CU) in Boulder. The IEC runs a number of specialized English-language programs, one of which is for the Mexican Navy (Secretaría de Marina [SEMAR]). The SEMAR cadet cohort discussed in this article was one facet of the Military English Language and Leadership Communication Program (MELLCP), a three-year-old partnership between the IEC, the Mexican Armed Forces, and the Mexican Ministry of Public Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública [SEP]). Several stakeholder goals were considered when creating the program. First, SEMAR's overarching goal was to enhance overall communication and collaboration between military and nonmilitary partners in the United States and other English-speaking countries. SEP's aim was to provide support for educational initiatives that will help SEMAR reach its goal of a 100 percent bilingual fighting force by 2025; SEP offered scholarship funding, communicated objectives, and reviewed post-program accountability reporting. Finally, the IEC sought to strengthen its collaboration with SEP by expanding the language-training options offered in the MELLCP.

In June 2018, SEMAR requested a Medical English course for 50 medical and nursing cadets, ranging in age from 18 to 25, to develop the level of medical training and experience from the cadets' first year of university to starting their residencies. Their English-language levels varied from beginner to intermediate (CEFR A1–B2); based on their language levels, the cadets were separated into four sections, with 12 or 13 students in each. The cadets not only wished to develop their medical English proficiency to improve doctor–nurse–patient interactions,

> **Each unit culminated with role plays of conversations about health-care issues between patients and their medical providers.**

but they also wanted to expand their everyday language skills in order to function more comprehensively in an English-speaking environment.

SEP requested a four-week program with 25 to 30 hours of classroom instruction per week. As only two of those four weeks fell within a regular IEC session, a fully customized program was developed with an emphasis on communicative competency: Medical English, General English, Grammar, Pronunciation, and Speak Out (task-based fluency development). For the following two weeks, aside from continuing their Medical English course, participants were partly integrated into the center's Intensive English Program, once again focusing on communicative competency: Pronunciation, Listening/Speaking, Speak Out, and an elective class. In addition to classroom instruction, the program included site visits (CU Anschutz Medical Campus), guest lectures (a nurse/midwife from CU's College of Nursing), and field trips (U.S. Air Force Academy), focusing on student interest in medical and military fields.

CURRICULUM

The Medical English curriculum for Turkmen medical specialists was scaffolded, moving from vocabulary-building in areas such as human body parts and body systems, to interacting with mock patients in order to discuss their symptoms and perform examinations. Role plays were incorporated throughout each unit so that students could practice dialoguing with patients about their bodies and illnesses, explaining diagnoses to patients and their families, and suggesting preventive health and lifestyle changes. A number of online resources (BBC Two 2019; Crayola 2019; English Club 2019) were

adapted to suit the needs of both student populations; an example is a health-literacy curriculum for English-language learners (ELLs) at the beginner and intermediate levels created by the Queens Public Library (2019) for adult immigrants in New York. Because the Queens Library materials were designed from the viewpoint of a patient with limited English, significant adaptation was needed to make them appropriate for Medical English professionals. However, these invaluable materials are rich and extensive, enabling students to learn relevant vocabulary and act out authentic role plays for a variety of medical situations, which are essential for both student populations.

Two textbooks were created, a student version and an answer key for instructors, containing audio files, transcripts, jigsaw activities, flash cards, case studies, picture stories, and content notes that provide medical information for ESL/EFL instructors who do not possess medical training. In addition to covering essential medical vocabulary, activities involved listening comprehension— for instance, of conversations between patients and medical professionals and of patients describing their symptoms. Case studies provided practice in reading comprehension, analysis, and problem-solving of medical situations. Additionally, students focused on their writing skills by answering questions on readings and audios. Essential grammar review emphasized communicative language between medical professionals and their patients: *Wh–* questions to elicit information; adjectives used to describe feelings and symptoms; modals of advice to give suggestions, instructions, directions, and prescriptions; hedging language and conditionals to explain diagnosis; and comparatives for demonstrating options. Each unit culminated with role plays of conversations about health-care

issues between patients and their medical providers. Integrating authentic role plays into a Medical English course reinforces medical professionals' communicative competency when interacting with their patients (Alqurashi 2016; Woodward-Kron and Elder 2016). During the creation of this Medical English course for Turkmen medical specialists and the modification of it for Mexican cadets, the focus remained on communicative competency so that these students could transfer their professional and educational knowledge in their native languages into successful interactions with patients and other medical professionals in the English language.

Formative assessments—conducted during the course to monitor learning—were incorporated throughout both versions of this course in the form of role plays applying materials to patient interactions and quizzes demonstrating comprehension of homework. The *summative assessment* of the course, or final exam, varied by student need. The Turkmen medical specialists participated in a patient-and-doctor role play, with their instructor performing as an international visitor to the country attending the Asian Olympic Games and requiring medical care. Likewise, the final exam for Mexican Navy cadets with a beginning English level was to perform a medical-professional-and-patient role play, with their instructor suffering from afflictions related to their specialization, such as cancer, depression, or a broken bone. For students with an intermediate level of English, the final exam consisted of group presentations about their specializations; because their English level was higher, this final exam was more difficult.

MODIFICATIONS

The Medical English curriculum and materials, created for Turkmen medical specialists, were adapted to meet the needs of the Mexican Navy cadets. A number of differences between these two student populations necessitated this revision. First, Turkmen medical specialists had the advantage of already being medical professionals with

work and life experience; in contrast, the Mexican Navy cadets were university students in training to become doctors and nurses, so they had less personal and professional experience. Second, the Mexican Navy cadets' native language, Spanish, aided in their rapid comprehension of Latin-based medical terms; conversely, the Turkmen medical specialists did not have this linguistic benefit, as they are native Turkmen speakers, most of them with a Russian-language educational background. Third, as many EFL teachers can attest, English-language teaching materials outside English-speaking countries can be challenging to obtain and often quite expensive. Thus, the increased availability of and access to Medical English materials in the United States provided more opportunities for curricular development and enhancement.

After the Medical English course was completed in Turkmenistan, three difficult yet important topics were identified as missing from the curriculum: domestic violence, mental health, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Addressing culturally sensitive topics with ELLs is challenging, but because Medical English students deal with life-threatening issues with their patients, it is essential for instructors and students alike to overcome their embarrassment and hesitancy around these issues. The *Medical Providers' Guide to Managing the Care of Domestic Violence Patients within a Cultural Context* (Bloomberg 2004) provides many useful materials, such as a guide to creating an escape plan for patients and possibly their children to leave an abusive environment. *English in Medicine: A Course in Communication Skills* (Glendinning and Holmström 2005) and *Professional English in Use: Medicine* (Glendinning and Howard 2007) are textbooks designed for intermediate-level ELLs that contain excellent activities for discussing patients' mental health, complete with authentic questions and examples of how to give mental-health referrals.

Activities addressing these issues were developed and implemented in the revised course for Mexican Navy cadets. As expected, the students who had more medical training

and experience assisting in hospitals had more knowledge of the prevalence of domestic violence, which is a problem that occurs in every country. They openly discussed strategies they had learned when helping victims of domestic violence and compared ways in which they had been trained to broach mental-health concerns with their patients. Additionally, students nearing the end of their university training and beginning their residencies freely talked about the importance of addressing with patients STDs, testing, and the use of contraceptives. Although incorporating these sensitive issues into an ESP classroom can bring up feelings of discomfort for all involved, ESL/EFL instructors must address the real-world, life-threatening issues that their students face. Not doing so is a disservice not only to them as medical professionals, but also to their patients; essentially, ESP educators have a duty to linguistically prepare their students to deal with life and its complexities.

While both student populations contained a range of English-language levels, from beginner to intermediate, there were a large number of Mexican Navy cadets at the CEFR B2 upper-intermediate level. This required additional changes at the IEC to expand and further develop the materials for these students. Due to this linguistic need, Hamp, a Medical English instructor and materials developer who is also a trained doula and midwife assistant, created additional activities.

One of the changes implemented by Hamp was the final exam for the upper-intermediate cadets. While role plays were appropriate for beginner students, upper-intermediate students required an exam better suited to their linguistic abilities; as a result, they prepared individual research-based presentations. These presentations highlighted the causes, symptoms, prevention, risk factors, diagnosis, treatment, and complications of a specific ailment chosen and researched by each student.

Another modification pertained to the vocabulary taught in the Medical English class. Intermediate students generally found the Latin-based medical vocabulary easily accessible but struggled with the pronunciation of these words, defaulting to their Spanish cognates. Therefore, their pronunciation class incorporated extra role plays using the transcripts in the Medical English curriculum. The vocabulary that these students found especially useful were simple, non-Latin-based words such as *chin*, *shin*, *bruise*, *brace*, and *cast*.

A final addition to the course included authentic reading and listening sources that explore medical ethics. Examples include a video and a jigsaw-reading activity about the organization Doctors Without Borders (Encyclopedia.com 2007; Doctors Without Borders 2016) that examine the history and current state of international medical aid (see Appendix). Another listening and

> **For us as educators, this is truly the best learning environment: students dedicated and motivated to learn as much as they can as quickly as possible, in order to better help others.**

discussion activity, based on the life of Henrietta Lacks (Skloot 2010; Henrietta Lacks Foundation 2019), addresses the ethics of using someone's cells without the person's permission to advance scientific and medical research (see Appendix). Aside from being level appropriate (CEFR B2), these activities prompted students to think critically about complex health issues in different contexts. Certainly, students' native-language, English-language, educational, and professional levels dictate how ESP materials developers and instructors create and modify materials.

CONCLUSION

It is our hope that the activities and materials detailed in this article are useful for other ESL/EFL professionals teaching and developing not only Medical English but also other ESP courses. Future implications for this ESP course are continuing to adapt materials based on particular student needs and modifying assessments. We would like to incorporate a midterm exam consisting of group presentations based on student specializations and to modify the final exam to become cumulative: listening, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and role plays with the instructor as patient.

The feedback from both student populations was overwhelmingly positive. The Turkmen medical specialists felt more confident when speaking in English with international patients and with visiting specialists conducting medical trainings in Turkmenistan. Moreover, an improvement in their English-language abilities has resulted in access to additional professional-development opportunities and scholarships outside their country. A number of them have participated in further medical-training courses conducted in English in Germany and South Korea. Similarly, the Mexican Navy cadets expressed a higher level of confidence when speaking and listening to medical situations and conversations. Both groups voiced the need and desire for continued Medical English classes and more time devoted to communicating about their field in English.

For us as educators, this is truly the best learning environment: students dedicated and motivated to learn as much as they can as quickly as possible, in order to better help others. Unlike many ELLs, medical specialists and those in training apply directly what they have learned with their patients. In other words, there is an immediate need for and application of what they learn in the English classroom to real life, a similarity shared with ESP students in other fields.

REFERENCES

Alqurashi, F. 2016. English for medical purposes for Saudi medical and health professionals. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 7 (6): 243–252. http://www.journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/alls/article/view/2936/2471

BBC Two. 2019. "Science Clips." https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00hxp2v/clips

Bloomberg, M. R. 2004. *Medical providers' guide to managing the care of domestic violence patients within a cultural context*. 2nd ed. New York: Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence. http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/downloads/pdf/Materials_Medical_Providers_DV_Guide.pdf

Chia, H. U., R. Johnson, H. L. Chia, and F. Olive. 1999. English for college students in Taiwan: A study of perceptions of English needs in a medical context. *English for Specific Purposes* 18 (2): 107–119.

Crayola. 2019. "Human Skeleton." http://www.crayola.com/free-coloring-pages/print/human-skeleton-coloring-page/

Doctors Without Borders. 2016. "This is Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)." *YouTube* video, 10:22. September 28, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uoq2EG3BpS4

Encyclopedia.com. 2007. "Médecins Sans Frontières" (Doctors Without Borders). http://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/political-science-and-government/international-organizations/doctors

English Club. 2019. "English for Nurses and Medical Professionals." Accessed July 29, 2019. https://www.englishclub.com/english-for-work/medical.htm

Glendinning, E. H., and B. A. S. Holmström. 2005. *English in medicine: A course in communication skills*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Glendinning, E. H., and R. Howard. 2007. *Professional English in use: Medicine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Henrietta Lacks Foundation. 2019. "The Henrietta Lacks Foundation." Accessed July 29, 2019. http://henriettalacksfoundation.org

Popa, D. E. 2013. Medical discourse and ESP courses for Romanian nursing undergraduates. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences* 83: 17–24.

Queens Public Library. 2019. "ESOL Curriculum for Teachers." https://www.queenslibrary.org/programs-activities/new-americans/learn-english/learn-english-for-everyday/esol-curriculum

Skloot, R. 2010. Henrietta Lacks: A donor's immortal legacy. Interview by Terry Gross. *Fresh Air*, NPR Audio, 37:11. February 2, 2010. https://www.npr.org/2010/02/02/123232331/henrietta-lacks-a-donors-immortal-legacy

Woodward-Kron, R., and C. Elder. 2016. A comparative discourse study of simulated clinical roleplays in two assessment contexts: Validating a specific-purpose language test. *Language Testing* 33 (2): 251–270.

Anna Hamp, who holds an MA in TEFL and linguistics, has taught ESL/EFL for 25 years at several Intensive English Programs in California and Colorado, as well as in Hungary and Israel. She has also worked as a proofreader, translator, and interpreter.

Kendra Staley earned her MATESOL from the University of Washington, Seattle. Since 2005, she has taught ESL/EFL in the United States, Guatemala, China, Indonesia, Colombia, and Turkmenistan. Kendra has twice been an English Language Fellow and an English Language Specialist.

Carolyn Allen holds an MATESOL from Hunter College at the City University of New York. Prior to her second career in English-language instruction and administration, Carolyn worked in advertising sales and marketing, including positions at NBC and ABC television.

APPENDIX

Medical Ethics Reading and Listening Sources

A. *Doctors Without Borders Activities*

1. Watch the ten-minute video found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uoq2EG3BpS4

   - What did you learn about the organization from the video?
   - Would you like to be involved with Doctors Without Borders in the future? Why or why not?

2. Read the text about the history of Doctors Without Borders at http://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/political-science-and-government/international-organizations/doctors

   Then write a paragraph summarizing what you learned.

B. *Life of Henrietta Lacks Activities*

Introduction from Skloot (2010):

In 1951, an African-American woman named Henrietta Lacks was diagnosed with terminal cervical cancer. She was treated at Johns Hopkins University, where a doctor named George Gey snipped cells from her cervix without telling her. Gey discovered that Lacks' cells could not only be kept alive, but would also grow indefinitely. For the past 60 years Lacks' cells have been cultured and used in experiments ranging from determining the long-term effects of radiation to testing the live polio vaccine. Her cells were commercialized and have generated millions of dollars in profit for the medical researchers who patented her tissue. Lacks' family, however, didn't know the cell cultures existed until more than 20 years after her death. Medical writer Rebecca Skloot examines the legacy of Lacks' contribution to science—and effect that has had on her family—in her new book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*.

Instructions: Listen to the 37-minute interview of the author of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* found at https://www.npr.org/2010/02/02/123232331/henrietta-lacks-a-donors-immortal-legacy

Then answer the following questions.

1. How have Henrietta Lacks' cells been used in medical research?
2. How is it possible to use cancer cells in medical research?
3. Henrietta was a poor African-American woman in 1951. How did her race affect the health care she received?
4. When did her family find out (learn) that her cells were alive and being used for medical research?
5. Why did Henrietta's daughter Deborah want so much to learn about her mother's life and the medical research done on her mother's cells?
6. Henrietta's family has never received any money from all of the medical research done on her cells. Why?
7. What is Rebecca Skloot's personal connection to people or their bodies being used for medical research?
8. Henrietta's death and the continued use of her cells in medical research raise many ethical questions for the scientific community. How did Skloot address the fact that many of Henrietta's descendants still can't pay for health care and don't have the money to receive an education?

Visit http://henriettalacksfoundation.org to learn more about the Henrietta Lacks Foundation.

DAVID COURTNEY

Vietnam

Activities to Activate and Maintain a Communicative Classroom

Student-centered instruction is a shared goal in English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) settings that embrace communicative language teaching (CLT) principles (East 2015). Student-centered classrooms create opportunities for learners to have consistent and meaningful interactions—two-way exchanges of ideas—using their second language (L2). Such interactions promote L2 development, as peers provide modified input and speakers are pushed to produce language that their partners understand (Hall 2011). As the popularity of student-centered classrooms has grown, knowledge-based objectives (testing for grammar and vocabulary knowledge) have been overtaken by more-communicative learning objectives (Plews and Zhao 2010). Beyond memorizing grammar or vocabulary for drills or exams, students must show that they can use real-life language to perform speaking and writing activities, often in small groups. This article will first discuss CLT principles and important criteria for communicative activities in the classroom and then describe four successful and engaging activities.

GOING BEYOND JUST SHARING ANSWERS

Task-based national curricula typically ask students to communicate by "sharing answers" at each stage of a lesson, including the beginning (pre-), middle (during-), and end (post-) stages (Nunan 2014). While in-service teachers understand the need for interactive pair work, many report that they do not have time to include more meaningful interactions beyond just sharing answers. Furthermore, some teachers still use traditional methods that involve a sequence known as *present, practice, produce* (also known as "PPP"), in which they present new grammar or vocabulary before students are expected to produce it. These practices may hinder more-meaningful student communication. If we acknowledge the importance of performance tasks for L2 development and the need for more than just sharing answers, how might communication become a regular and meaningful part of classroom practice?

STRONGER ACTIVITIES COULD BE THE ANSWER

A classroom informed by CLT principles can include the use of communicative activities at each lesson stage (pre-, during-, and post-lesson). If an activity is a short warm-up to introduce a lesson (five to ten minutes in

length), it is a pre-task. That means students do the task to prepare for learning, use language they already know, and/or review previously learned content (Nunan 2014). During a lesson, a communicative activity mainly involves the practice of new language. Textbook practice and answer sharing can be part of the during-task. Finally, in a CLT-informed post-task activity, students are expected to perform (communicate by speaking or writing) with greater self-confidence and accuracy. Accuracy may also be given less focus (East 2015).

The first two stages of lessons (pre-task and during-task) can be strengthened to empower students for better speaking and writing performance. To implement activities with more meaningful communication earlier in lessons, the literature calls for a "balance of the four strands of meaning-focused input, language-focused learning, meaning-focused output and fluency activities" (Nation and Macalister 2010, 51). Non-language factors are also important, such as students' motivation, anxiety, need for autonomy, beliefs, and prior experience of education.

FOUR CRITERIA FOR BETTER ACTIVITIES

The literature describes four criteria that can be used to design, implement, and evaluate more-communicative activities. Each criterion is connected to the balance of L2 development, student autonomy, and motivation.

1. *Fun activities* reduce stress and may help students remember content (Helgesen and Kelly 2016). Fun activities may also increase students' integrative (internally derived) motivation and include topics that they know and care about (Nation and Macalister 2010).

2. *Meaningful activities* give students a chance to be experts and solve problems. Here, sharing ideas is more important than listening for perfect grammar. Repeated meaningful interactions also promote fluency, as students speak with greater efficiency over time.

3. *Interactive activities* require students to use their L2 to complete a shared task. Related to Nation and Macalister's (2010) language-focused strand, interaction may also lead to improved accuracy and explicit attention to language learning during each interaction.

4. *Routine (frequent) activities* help students better understand the directions for each task, which may lead to easier implementation and improved on-task behavior (Kagan and Kagan 2009). Furthermore, if students repeat a task later in a course, they may be able to take on a more demanding language focus because the task is already familiar (Nunan 2014). Finally, fun activities repeated periodically over time may deepen students' memories of each activity.

FOUR ACTIVITIES

The four activities described here can be shortened (to review a previous lesson) or lengthened (to develop that day's lesson topic). Each activity requires minimal materials (usually just pens and paper). Activity 1: Draw a Dream House—my students' favorite activity—encourages group work and builds rapport. Activity 2: I'm Not Just a Number focuses on accurate question word order and learning about classmates' lives. Activity 3: Paragraph Pass is a collaborative writing task in which students add sentences to signal words in order to focus on both grammar and the meaning of ideas. Activity 4: Marketplace facilitates the sharing (and valuing) of students' ideas in their L2.

Each activity's description contains enough detail so that teachers can use it as is or adapt it for their setting. In addition, the communicative merit of each activity is evaluated according to the four criteria.

Activity 1: Draw a Dream House
Students in groups of three or four draw a house by sharing the same marker and paper—while not being allowed to speak! Afterwards, speaking seems to emerge because of the

tension of having to share a goal without using language. Figure 1 shows an example of houses drawn collaboratively by four participants in Cambodia and four others in Vietnam.

Rationale

In Draw a Dream House, students must keep completely silent as they draw a house together. The activity focuses students on intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Sun (2014) emphasizes that ICC activities must include "empathy, respect, tolerance, sensitivity, flexibility, and openness in communicating with speakers from different culture and linguistic backgrounds." These principles give students the foundation they need to communicate across cultures and build rapport as language learners.

Having a shared purpose is key. Group members begin by thinking about their own individual "dream house" design, but once the group shares control of only one marker, members discover that they must let their peers lead at different times. Afterwards, they are eager to talk about their work and how they succeeded. The activity is especially useful for team building in preparation for group work or life in general.

Participants. The activity has been used with elementary through advanced EFL students and in-service ESL/EFL teachers in Cambodia, Peru, the United States, and Vietnam.

Materials. Only simple materials are required.

1. Poster paper (one per group)

2. Markers (one per group)

3. Optional scratch paper (one per student)

If poster paper and markers are not available, students can do the activity with pen and paper.

Procedure (~20–25 minutes). The activity is divided into pre-, during-, and post-task stages.

Pre-task (6–7 minutes). Students brainstorm a stressful situation and house vocabulary.

1. Form groups (three or four students per group).

2. Give students a stressful situation to think about, possibly related to taking exams or another common experience. Then tell students to imagine their dream house—a place where they can relax.

3. Give groups a sheet of paper and have them write a T-chart on the paper (see Figure 2). One student writes and all students help brainstorm a list of nouns for what is inside and what is outside their dream house.

Figure 1. Sample dream houses drawn by conference participants from Cambodia (left) and Vietnam (right) (Courtney 2018)

Inside	Outside
Five rooms	A river
Ten chairs	A helicopter

Figure 2. Sample T-chart for brainstorming what is inside and outside the dream house

During-task (6–7 minutes). Surprise! Groups share a marker to draw their dream house.

1. Give only one marker and one poster paper to each group.

2. Tell groups they have five minutes to draw their shared dream house. All group members must hold the marker at the same time. No speaking is allowed as they draw!

3. Ask questions to confirm they understand the instructions: "What are you going to do?"; "How much time will you have?"; "Is speaking allowed?" Ask one or two students to repeat the instructions.

4. Start the time (five minutes) for students to draw and monitor that students are silent and drawing. Often, groups will start laughing after a minute or two as they try to keep silent!

5. When time is up, call students to attention; I raise my hand as a signal.

Post-task (8–10 minutes). A final speaking or writing task is optional.

1. Present a few key questions about the house, such as these:

- What does the house have? How many windows?

- What do you like about the house?

- How much does it cost?

2. Group members have five minutes to brainstorm the answers to the questions.

3. Reporters (one or two students) share with the whole class for audience approval.

Options. Teachers can introduce the writing of a paragraph. Students write a topic sentence with an adjective about the house. Answers to the questions above can be details, and students can add their own final sentence as a conclusion. For a challenge, they can write about a house from a different group by interviewing the members of that group. As a final reflection for higher-proficiency students, the questions in Figure 3 can be presented for groups to think more deeply about the "process of drawing a house."

How Activity 1 Meets the Four Criteria
Draw a Dream House requires unforgettable collaboration at all levels, and it meets the four criteria because it is fun, meaningful, interactive, and routine.

Fun. Students who do the activity report that it is fun and helps people—even if they do

1. What was easy about drawing the house? What was difficult?

2. How did you feel when you were drawing the house?

3. Was there a leader in your group? Who? How much time did you lead?

4. Is it more satisfying to draw a house by yourself or with the group? Why?

5. What surprised you about drawing the house?

Figure 3. Reflection questions about the Draw a Dream House activity

not know one another well—work together toward a common goal. Furthermore, the early silence helps build up a desire to speak later.

Meaningful. The interaction is nonlinguistic at first, and that is a pleasant surprise for students. All must draw with the goal of one final product. Positive tension builds during the drawing, which seems to push students to want to interact in their L2 later. Students create their own meaningful content. Later, house drawings can introduce new vocabulary (nouns), grammar (comparative), and culture (e.g., What is a typical house? Why is this house the best?).

Interactive. Questions about students' house drawings can be tailored to their language-proficiency level. I ask elementary learners to describe what they see in the picture. I encourage advanced learners to reflect on how they succeeded (see Figure 3). Simple questions seem to help interaction.

Routine. The same groupings may be used for future group work to build rapport. After the procedure is learned, the same activity can be used again for drawing new content and vocabulary, such as restaurants, meals, or cities.

Final Thoughts

As a communicative activity, Draw a Dream House has the potential to meet the needs of both elementary and advanced students. All levels will experience collaboration. For language-related needs, beginners may benefit from vocabulary cards (for pre-task), or a checklist of household vocabulary can be distributed, and students mark with a check (✓) if the item is present in another group's house (post-task). Advanced students can use the activity as a guide to prepare for projects by answering how they were successful and then listing "how to work together" for a project. This list can be used to solve any disagreements that come up during the project.

Activity 2: I'm Not Just a Number

During I'm Not Just a Number, peers are encouraged to ask accurate questions to find out the meaning of important numbers that relate to their partner. "I'm just a number" is an idiomatic expression with a negative connotation; if I say, "I'm just a number," it means I do not feel respected as an individual. In contrast, during this activity, students show respect for their partners as people by asking information questions and guessing the meaning of their partners' important numbers.

Rationale

Students often struggle with the word order of questions, and they may not have chances to create their own questions for specific kinds of information. This activity uses students' genuine interest in their peers to motivate them to ask accurate questions in their L2. In addition, the content is authentic; important numbers (e.g., year of a milestone, number of siblings) are provided by students, which may promote motivation (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Furthermore, guessing the significance of each number requires critical thinking.

Participants. The activity can be used with elementary through advanced learners.

Instructors may model question forms to ask for number or quantity, such as "When?" and "How many?"

Materials. Only paper (one piece per student) and pencils or pens (one per student) are needed.

Procedure (~15–20 minutes). The activity is a helpful icebreaker. It must first be modeled clearly by the teacher. The activity is divided into pre-, during-, and post-task stages.

Pre-task (3–4 minutes). Model the activity about yourself.

1. Model the activity by using four important numbers of your own. Start by writing four circles on the board (see Figure 4). Write one number in each circle, such as "2003," "4," "9," and "3." Key words and terms can be provided for answers: in this

case, "high school," "brothers," "years teaching," and "live in Peru."
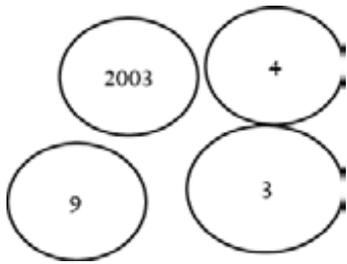
Figure 4. An example of a teacher's four important numbers for modeling

2. Ask students to ask the right question for each number and wait for the question. For example, "What question can you ask to get the answer '2003'?" If needed, write "When/What year did you _____?" After two or three tries, fill in the blank with "graduate from high school."

3. Provide prompts for more time/quantity questions and write down what students say (see Figure 5). If you want to focus on accuracy, students can vote if they think the question results in a time/quantity answer. For example, if students ask, "Did you graduate from high school?" they can see the answer and vote to cross it out because the answer is "yes" or "no."

2003:	When did you _____?
5:	How many _____?
9:	How long _____?
33:	How old _____?

Figure 5. Prompts for I'm Not Just a Number pre-task

During-task (10–12 minutes). Students do the activity in pairs.

1. Each student gets one piece of paper and draws four circles on it, as in Figure 4.

2. Each student writes his or her own number in each circle.

3. Students trade their paper with a partner. To earn one point, their partner must (a) ask the right question and (b) use the correct word order. Ask one or two students to repeat the directions.

4. Pairs interact to ask the right questions about the numbers on their partner's paper. When the correct question is asked, students make a checkmark (✓) for a point on their paper. The teacher monitors for word order, helpful behavior, and requests for more time. If students are stuck, they can write key words on their paper to help their partner.

Post-task (5-10 minutes). These optional tasks can add more critical thinking:

1. After about ten minutes, ask pairs to share with the class the most interesting or funniest fact that they learned.

2. The class votes on the best fact.

How Activity 2 Meets the Four Criteria
Students obtain valuable information about their peers; teachers also learn about their students and can informally assess grammar.

Fun. Students have a good time learning about their peers and are encouraged to use their L2. However, it is important to not frustrate them. For example, if students struggle to ask a question with the correct word order, they can rely on their peers' help.

Meaningful. Two aspects of this activity are particularly helpful: students get to know their classmates, and they have opportunities to help one another.

Interactive. Each participant gets to ask and answer questions. The two-way flow of information is needed to complete the activity. Mixed-level pairs may further support elementary students' accuracy; elementary students can listen to the correct question from their partner and write the question on their paper for practice.

Routine. Activity 2 can be modified for future use. For example, other types of information can be written as answers in each circle, such as a calendar date or a type of food or drink. Partners could then come up with questions to ask, such as, "What drink do you like?"

Final Thoughts

This activity is ideal for encouraging students to engage in critical thinking, as they make predictions and create questions for numbers with unknown meaning. Teachers can be creative and use the game to help students practice previously learned vocabulary.

Activity 3: Paragraph Pass

Paragraph Pass is partly based on collaborative story writing and can last up to 20 minutes. Students learn the important use of transition or signal words to create their own shared story; at more advanced levels, the signal words are used to develop cause-and-effect, persuasive, or argumentative texts.

Rationale

Paragraph Pass helps students develop reading, writing, and speaking fluency, as they create their own shared story, using language that they already know. Writing is linked to speaking for support of L2 development (Nunan 2014), and L2 competence may improve thanks to writing. L2 writing can also scaffold speaking in academic contexts where much of the speech is guided by academic written registers (Biber and Conrad 2009). Furthermore, knowledge of transition or signal words—*first, second, finally, for example*—is important for comprehending and relating ideas of whole texts. Such signal words provide a clearer flow of information (Grabe and Stoller 2011). Because signal words control how sentences fit together into meaningful text, this activity helps students strengthen their understanding of how grammar is connected to meaning. In addition, a fun, interactive activity like Paragraph Pass helps students review what they learned in previous lessons. It can also be a during-lesson activity, as students practice writing and speaking in a freer setting and experience teachable moments with less stress. Teachers monitor during or after the writing steps to see which aspects of discourse students need help with.

Participants. Elementary learners use a simpler sequence of four signal words, so groups of four are best (Figure 6). Meanwhile, advanced learners may need academic registers for argumentation—so groups of five or six are best (Figure 7).

Materials. Each student needs a pen and a printable template (see Figures 6 and 7).

1. One template paper with needed signal words for each student

2. A pen (one for each student)

Procedure (~15–20 minutes). Groups of four (Figure 6) or five (Figure 7) participants sit in a circle. All participants begin with the same template paper. Figure 8 shows what happens to one student's template paper during the activity with five students—but note that all students pass their paper to the left for their group member to continue the

A Busy Day in My Life	A Busy Day in My Life
First, _____.	**First,** I woke up at 5:40 a.m.
Second, _____.	**Second,** I walked two miles to school.
After that, _____.	**After that,** I took an exam, and I walked home for lunch.
Finally, _____.	**Finally,** I returned to school because I forgot my wallet. It was a busy day!

Figure 6. Elementary template (left) and finished example from students (right)

paragraph. Each group member adds one sentence to the paragraph and then passes it clockwise. After the final sentence is written, the paper returns to the original owner. A group of five students will produce five different paragraphs, which can be quite coherent, funny, or confusing, allowing for teachable moments.

Pre-task (3–4 minutes). Select a template and model the activity.

1. Before the activity, decide what template students need. Student group size equals the number of signal words in the template.

2. Divide the class into groups. Each group member receives one template paper.

3. Model the activity on the board by drawing an image, as in Figure 8.

During-task (6–10 minutes). Students write and pass their papers, one sentence at a time.

1. Each student has one template paper and writes the first sentence.

2. Each student in the group passes the paper clockwise, to the left.

3. Each student has one or two minutes to write the next sentence.

4. Repeat the previous two steps as many times as needed to return the template to the original owner. Signal when all groups are finished. Early finishers can ask peers about unclear words.

Post-task (5–6 minutes). The paper returns to each owner.

1. When each paper returns to its owner, each student reads the completed paragraph out loud to the group. Groups choose either the funniest or the most accurate paragraph and state why they made that choice.

2. If time allows, a reporter from each group shares with the whole class, and the class votes on the best paragraph. (I usually collect finished papers for future quizzes or error correction.)

How Activity 3 Meets the Four Criteria
In my experience, the activity is fun, meaningful, interactive, and part of a routine that puts students in charge of creating.

Fun. Students eagerly wait for the next paragraph as each sentence is completed.

Another opportunity for fun comes during the final evaluation in the post-task, when students read their paragraphs out loud and choose the best example to share with the whole class.

Smoking and Health	Smoking and Health
It's important that _____.	**It's important that** we consider the risks of smoking for our health.
For example, _____.	**For example,** smoking can cause cancer, gum disease, and poor blood flow.
However, _____.	**However,** in movies, smoking looks attractive because my favorite superheroes smoke while they fight villains.
Nevertheless, _____.	**Nevertheless,** those heroes may be in the hospital someday because of smoking.
In conclusion, _____.	**In conclusion,** humans don't have superpowers, so we need to find ways to quit.

Figure 7. Advanced template (left) and finished example from students (right)

Meaningful. The construction of each paragraph is meaningful, as students add familiar content with less pressure about grammatical accuracy. The suspense builds as the paragraph returns to its owner, and participants find out how their contribution resulted in a complete paragraph (or not!).

Interactive. Students must interact to complete the paragraph. Not all paragraphs will be equal in quality and accuracy, and students will want to share their opinions during the discussion. Writing has real consequences toward overall accuracy, as writers interact.

Routine. As learners' academic skills grow, the activity can be repeated later with a more advanced template. With repetition, students will have an easier time, so it is recommended that they try this activity more than once during a course.

Final Thoughts

The activity requires that all group members have a chance to contribute to several paragraphs and provides students with a chance to review how important signal words are to connect parts of a text and create meaningful communication. Each paragraph will have a different opening sentence written by the owner, so no two paragraphs will be exactly alike. This allows for comparison and critical thinking during the final sharing stage.

This activity offers a review of accuracy as one objective. Lyster and Mori's (2006) counterbalance hypothesis suggests that students may pay more attention to accuracy if a meaning-focused task—for example, writing the next meaningful sentence—suddenly takes on a language focus, such as listening to the paragraph with the best grammar. Therefore, besides having fun writing a meaningful paragraph, students receive valuable input for accuracy.

Activity 4: Marketplace

This activity was demonstrated to me in Cambodia by a U.S. Department of State English Language Fellow, Kitty Johnson (2018). At that time, it was introduced as an end-of-lesson reflection, and I have adapted it for this activity. Marketplace can be used as a warm-up for students to share opinions before a lesson or as a review to check students' learning after a lesson. Students are given three small squares of scrap paper; on each paper, they must write a one-sentence opinion about a topic. Each student finds a partner and reads his or her paper out loud. If that partner agrees with the statement, he or she can "buy" the paper by signing his or her name (or not, if the student does not agree).

Rationale

The activity offers students a chance to practice both speaking and writing. Writing occurs during the generation of ideas, and speaking (along with listening and reading) occurs as students share their ideas with partners. Students can use writing to guide them during real-time speaking interactions, if needed. It is possible that writing may help scaffold speaking, and vice versa, particularly for advanced academic levels (Rausch 2015). Finally, students gain ideas from classmates, and such interaction of ideas may be required for language learning to occur.
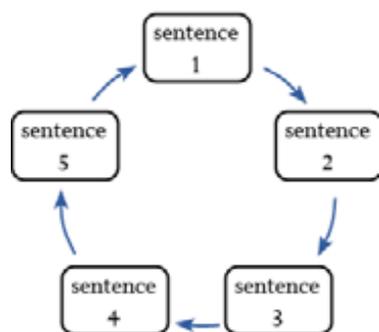
Each group member begins with one template paper.

Figure 8. One sentence is added by each group member during Paragraph Pass.

Learning is relational, from a sociocultural perspective, and that is promoted by tasks like Marketplace.

Participants. I use this activity with elementary through advanced learners. Elementary students may choose a topic related to their favorite drink or dessert, while advanced students may choose a topic related to their career or future plans.

Materials. A pen and three pieces of scrap paper per student are required.

Procedure (~15–20 minutes). Based on the topic, each student writes three short sentences, one on each paper, in response to a question on the board. Each student finds a partner, and the partners take turns reading each other's paper out loud. Each partner decides whether to "buy" the paper from the other person. Students agree to buy it by saying why they agree, signing it, and taking it. If they disagree, they do not buy it. Next, they find a new partner and repeat the steps.

Pre-task (3–4 minutes). Model the activity with one or two students.

1. Show a slide with sentence stems or write questions on the board (see Figure 10) and go over the following instructions:

   a. "First, choose three sentences. Copy the beginning of each sentence on your three papers. Decide how you would complete them. Write your own ending to each sentence on each paper."

   b. "Second, raise your hand to show you are free. Find a free partner."

   c. "Third, take turns reading your partner's paper. If you agree with the idea on the paper, you want to 'buy' the paper. To buy the paper, say why you agree, sign your name, and take the paper. If you disagree, say why you will not buy the paper."

   d. "Your partner does the same for each of your papers. After you are finished buying or selling, you must keep at least one paper. The rule is that you must have at least one paper at all times."

   e. "When you are finished, raise your hand and find a free partner. Keep going!"

2. Give each student three squares of paper. Everyone has three minutes to write all sentences.

During-task (10–12 minutes). Students do the activity for ten minutes while the teacher monitors.

1. Students begin the activity by finding a free partner. Partners take turns reading their partner's paper out loud.
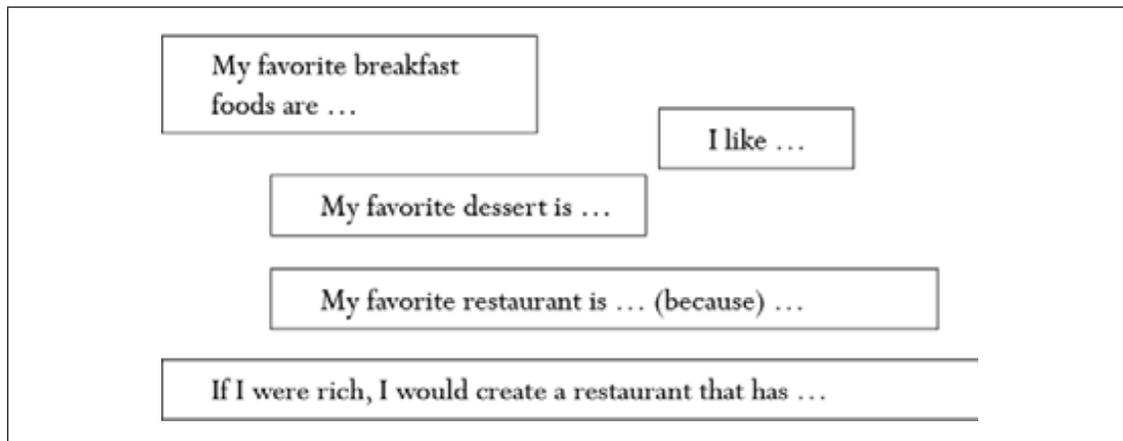
Figure 10. Sentence stems for modeling Marketplace (adapted from Johnson 2018)

Marketplace is fun, interactive, meaningful, and part of a communicative routine for warm-ups or a post-task learning check.

If a partner wants to "buy" that paper, that person must say why he or she agrees, sign it, and take it. (Or, he or she disagrees and does not buy it). The other partner does the same.

2. Students switch partners by raising their hand and finding someone else who is free. Again, each student must have at least one paper at all times.

Post-task (3–4 minutes). Individuals share favorite ideas while not revealing the author.

1. Group members share their papers with one another.

2. They can share the most popular or interesting ideas with the class. Students with four or more signatures can read their paper out loud, and authors can be revealed for prizes!

How Activity 4 Meets the Four Criteria
Marketplace is fun, interactive, meaningful, and part of a communicative routine for warm-ups or a post-task learning check.

Fun. Students love this activity. The more they do it, the more competitive they become. Almost all students experience winning; at least once, somebody will "buy" their idea. Student anxiety is low because the task is not difficult. The "best idea" could be the one with the most signatures.

Meaningful. The activity is meaningful because it entails the discovery of ideas from students themselves. Marketplace allows students to learn from one another and to sell their ideas to peers. Each pairing is a meaningful interaction. Because buying and selling is universal across cultures, this aspect might help students work through the activity.

Interactive. The activity is interactive because it requires sharing of ideas. The time given for each interaction depends on each pair. It is up to the teacher to give more time, reduce the time, or add an extra opportunity for further interaction. Sometimes students correct or improve each other's sentences for stronger meaning to make sure their ideas are better received by their next partner. Teachers can add this requirement for additional focus on accuracy.

Routine. The activity can be done routinely as a warm-up or as a post-lesson learning check. Students can share their worries or concerns about an upcoming assignment. I collect all the squares and use students' opinions to plan my next lesson.

Final Thoughts
Activity 4 may be the simplest and most adaptable of the four activities presented here. Directions need to be clear, and modeling the warm-up is crucial. As in the other three activities, content is generated by students themselves. However, teachers can monitor to make sure that students do speak so that they are not overly dependent on silently reading their papers. Putting phrases on the board may help scaffold questions and answers—for example, "What do you think? Do you agree? Why?" I also use this warm-up activity to collect student data (e.g., "I learned _____" or "I need _____").

After several rounds, learners work toward clearer understanding and more focused thinking about a topic. This helps students improve their ideas through brainstorming, a narrowing process (Folse 2006). Ultimately, they discover new ideas thanks to their peers. This is the essence of student-centered learning.

CONCLUSION

Activities can be fun, meaningful, interactive, and routinely used to build and maintain a communicative culture in the classroom. While these four criteria are supported by the literature, it is always important for teachers to select activities that they can adapt and use in their specific settings. An innovation in one setting may not work in another without modifications to that activity (Nation and Macalister 2010). Therefore, teachers should plan in advance.

For example, with Draw a Dream House, it is logical for students to draw something that is relevant to the theme, unit, or lesson for that day. For I'm Not Just a Number, the easiest language-focused strand may be numbers, but teachers can adapt the activity for other kinds of information that students find important. Meanwhile, Paragraph Pass is adaptable for different levels and objectives; while it is focused on discourse skills, it need not be for strictly academic purposes. Finally, Marketplace can be adapted and used at the beginning, middle, or end of lessons.

All innovations require careful monitoring by the teacher, and any attempt requires respect for learners' experience and beliefs. Yet, as students become familiar with the expectation that they must create, evaluate, and share their ideas, they are likely to do so with greater enthusiasm. Fun, meaningful, interactive, and routine activities help students build stronger habits for communication that go beyond simply "sharing answers" to more fully reflect CLT-based outcomes.

REFERENCES

Biber, D., and S. Conrad. 2009. *Register, genre, and style*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Courtney, D. 2018. "Icebreakers for a communicative classroom culture." Workshop presented at the 14th Annual CamTESOL Conference, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, February 10–11.

East, M. 2015. Taking communication to task—again: What difference does a decade make? *The Language Learning Journal* 43 (1): 6–19.

Flowerdew, J., and L. Miller. 2005. *Second language listening: Theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Folse, K. S. 2006. *The art of teaching speaking: Research and pedagogy for the ESL/EFL Classroom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Grabe, W., and F. L. Stoller. 2011. *Teaching and researching reading*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Hall, G. 2011. *Exploring English language teaching: Language in action*. New York: Routledge.

Helgesen, M., and C. Kelly. 2016. Do-it-yourself NeuroELT: Ways to make your textbook more brain-friendly. *SPELT Quarterly* 30 (3): 32–37.

Johnson, K. 2018. "Lesson planning and writing objectives." Workshop presented for in-service teachers prior to intake of Peace Corps volunteers, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Kagan, S., and M. Kagan. 2009. *Kagan cooperative learning*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan.

Lyster, R., and H. Mori. 2006. Interactional feedback and instructional counterbalance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28 (2): 269–300.

Nation, I. S. P., and J. Macalister. 2010. *Language curriculum design*. New York: Routledge.

Nunan, D. 2014. Task-based teaching and learning. In *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. 4th ed. Ed. M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, and M. A. Snow, 455–470. Boston: National Geographic Learning.

Plews, J. L., and K. Zhao. 2010. Tinkering with tasks knows no bounds: ESL teachers' adaptations of task-based language-teaching. *TESL Canada Journal* 28 (1): 41–59.

Rausch, P. 2015. "The Relationship between English Speaking and Writing Proficiency and Its Implications for Instruction." Master's thesis, St. Cloud State University. https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/engl_etds/34

Sun, Y. 2014. "What is intercultural communicative competence?" *TESOL Blog*, December 15. http://blog.tesol.org/what-is-intercultural-communicative-competence/

David Courtney, MA, is an ESL instructor from the United States. He has taught in Peru, the United States, Bolivia, Vietnam, and Cambodia. His current passions involve adapting lessons for active learning and sharing with teachers through engaging workshops.

READER'S GUIDE

This guide is designed to enrich your reading of the articles in this issue. You may choose to read them on your own, taking notes or jotting down answers to the discussion questions below. Or you may use the guide to explore the articles with colleagues.

For example, many teachers discuss *Forum* at regularly scheduled meetings with department colleagues and members of teachers' groups, or in teacher-training courses and workshops. Often, teachers choose an article for their group to read before the meeting or class, then discuss that article when they meet. Teachers have found it helpful to take notes on articles or write a response to an article and bring that response to share in a discussion group. Another idea is for teachers to try a selected activity or technique described in one of the articles, then report back to the group on their experiences and discuss positives, negatives, and possible adaptations for their teaching context.

Case Studies in ESP Course Development: Medical English for Turkmen and Mexican Medical Specialists
(Pages 2–9)

Pre-Reading

1. Read the title of this article. Do you think the content of the article will apply to you and your teaching situation? If so, why? If not, try to think of ways that the article *might* apply to your teaching.

2. What would you do if you were assigned to teach a course in Medical English? What information would you need when designing the curriculum to make sure the course is relevant and practical for the learners?

3. Have you ever taught an English for specific purposes (ESP) course? What was the topic? What was the experience like for you and your students?

4. In what ways do you think an ESP course differs from a general English course? In what ways might those courses be similar?

Post-Reading

1. The authors provide details about their teaching contexts and the learners they worked with. Go back and jot down notes about their contexts and learners. How do the authors' situations compare with your own—and how might that affect the approach you take?

2. The authors used role plays for language practice and for assessment. Effective role plays are often context-specific; what relevant scenarios could you create for your students in your ESP course?

3. The authors write, "Teaching English for specific purposes (ESP), such as Medical English, is especially impactful due to high student motivation and immediate real-world application." After you read this article, can you think of ways to apply these techniques to other courses you teach? That is, even if you are not teaching an ESP course, how can this article help you to increase your students' motivation and the real-world application of the content?

4. Is it necessary for a Medical English instructor to have expertise in medicine and patient care? If an instructor has limited experience and expertise with the topic of an ESP course, what are some ways the instructor can use that limited knowledge to the students' advantage?

**Activities to Activate and Maintain a Communicative Classroom
(Pages 10–21)**

Pre-Reading

1. Why is it important for students to talk to and listen to one another in English?

2. If your students are not used to learning in a communicative style, how can you get them started? What can you do to make them feel comfortable with this style of learning?

3. What is your favorite communicative activity? Why do you like it? What makes it successful?

4. In your opinion, what do effective communicative activities have in common?

Post-Reading

1. Choose one of the communicative activities you thought about when you answered the Pre-Reading questions. Does it meet the four criteria that the author presents on page 11? If not, how could you adapt the activity so that it meets all four criteria?

2. The author suggests that strong activities should be used frequently so that they become part of the students' learning routine. Do you agree with this? Do you usually adapt and repeat activities throughout a course, or do you tend to use different activities in order to add variety? Which of your favorite activities could you use more frequently—and how might you adapt it to keep it fresh and relevant?

3. The author provides detailed descriptions of four activities. Which one would you like to try first? Pick one and try it with your students. Does your experience match your expectations? How might you adapt the activity in the future?

4. The author emphasizes both *activating* and *maintaining* a communicative classroom. Once you manage to make your classroom communicative, how can you ensure that your students will maintain that communicative atmosphere? What steps can you take, and what steps can your students take?

Getting Young Learners to Stick to English

by LAURA LODER BUECHEL
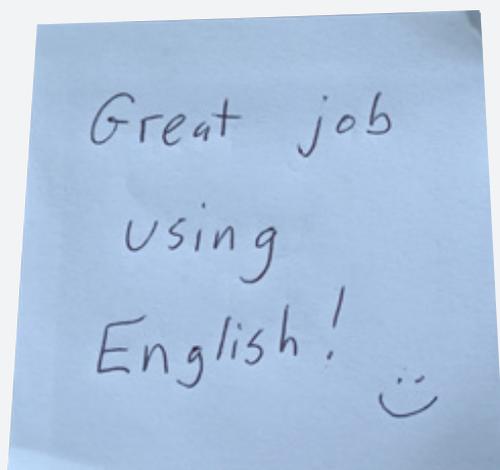
Do you find yourself saying, "Come on, kids, use your English!" more often than you would like to? Do you catch yourself switching into the local language for reasons you can't really justify? The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2010) encourages teachers and their students to "use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom," and local boards of education around the world, including here in Switzerland, mention something similar in their local curricula. Yet it is easier said than done.

Local-language use in the foreign-language classroom has its place. Macaro (2001) speaks in favor of allowing natural code-switching from the side of the learners, especially younger ones, but explicit use of the mother tongue (as compared to

haphazard) from the side of the teachers, which Butzkamm (2003) would consider to be for grammar explanations and for linguistic comparisons.

Regardless of the teacher's reasoning behind the use of the local language, one important role of a teacher is that of encourager or motivator (and, sometimes, cheerleader) to encourage learners to explore and use the target language. The following is a compilation of ideas I have tried out in my own lessons, along with ideas collected from observations in Swiss schools over the years. Before we start, it must be said that some classes don't need any of the tricks listed below; students in those classes are intrinsically motivated to learn. Maybe it's the class dynamic due to or despite the teacher, but they want to learn, and the atmosphere is right. This is unfortunately not always the case, however, and teachers occasionally look for alternative ideas. Providing those ideas is the purpose of this article.

MODELING THE BEHAVIOR YOU WANT YOUR LEARNERS TO USE

Teachers who constantly switch back to the local language are not modeling a behavior they probably would like to see their own learners employ. Paraphrasing, using body language, and simply asking for help when you yourself can't find the language are the same strategic competence skills we should teach our learners, as these examples illustrate:

- Ask for help: "Oh, my goodness! What does *Chuchichestli* [Swiss German for 'kitchen cabinet'] mean in English? Can anyone help?"

- Use body language: "I don't know the word for this sport (jump around to show the sport of fencing)—does anyone know?"

- Paraphrase: "When we were in the United States, we ate that sweet dessert, kind of like a giant cakey Oreo." (whoopie pie)

- Play nonchalant by throwing in a local-language word in a target-language accent: "One day I was walking up the *treppes* [German for 'steps'], and I fell down!"

I'm often amazed at what children actually know—and in these instances, you are demonstrating to them the skills people use for communicating when they haven't mastered a language or simply have drawn a blank. Like this, the children will model your behavior next time they get stuck.

PRAISING THE USE OF ENGLISH … AND ALLOWING MISTAKES

Everyone reacts well to a bit of positive reinforcement for effort. When a child who doesn't often speak—or who rarely speaks in English—says something in English, I sometimes leave a little sticky note (*Great job! You were caught using English!*), praise the whole class even if it was only one child, or just directly tell the child how pleased I am.

On the same note, those of you who have children perhaps know this type of conversation:

Mommy, can I go outside and play?

Sure! As soon as you've done your homework and cleaned your room and helped with supper!

In my classroom, it can look like this:

Teacher, can I say this in German?

Sure! As soon as you've tried to say it in English!

And once the child has said it in English, he or she gets a positive word and a kind smile.

PRIZE DISTRIBUTION OR REMOVAL

The Swiss do not generally appreciate rewarding learners with food or stickers, but I have observed the following techniques work in classes of eight-year-olds:

- A string is taped to the back of every child's chair. A child who puts in a strong effort to stick to English and not just fall into using German can choose a few beads from the "cool bead jar" (the teacher I observed had pirate-and-skull beads and fairy beads, for example). After a while, the child will have enough beads to use the string for a necklace or some other fun creation.

- During group work, have small bowls or muffin-tin liners in the middle of the group. The teacher can add a few kernels of popcorn, tokens, or stickers as a reward for good behavior. The popcorn then goes into a container for later popping when there's enough; the tokens get added up at the end of the day, and when there's a certain number, the whole class gets to choose a game or song or dance or fun activity in English. If it's a

> **The concept lies in rewarding and acknowledging model behavior but not punishing less-than-optimal behavior.**

competition, the group with the most tokens can choose the reward.

The concept lies in rewarding and acknowledging model behavior but not punishing less-than-optimal behavior.

LOCAL-LANGUAGE TABLE (*STAMMTISCH*) OR STOPLIGHTS

A child or group that feels the need to speak the local language (perhaps the content point is really deep, or maybe the instructions are too complex to work out in English) is allowed to get up and go to the designated *Stammtisch* in a corner of the room. When that's settled, the students go back to their places and continue in English. Similarly, in group work, a group that "needs" to use the local language can put up a "stoplight." In my classroom, I used laminated stoplights, which I had glued onto popsicle sticks. The learners could hold up the popsicle stick/stoplight to let me know that they were aware that they had switched to the local language. By doing so, they are aware of the switch and how long they have switched, and the teacher can monitor or provide necessary support.

TALKING CHIPS OR TOKENS

Each learner gets two game chips, and anyone who uses the local language has to give one up. The learners who finish the lesson and still have two get a kind word. With more-advanced learners, the chips are for conversation roles: red for asking a question, blue for being devil's advocate, and so on. The learners have to use their chips for the task within the time allotted. These roles can be similar to any sort of "reading" roles that can be applied to conversation, too.

ROLES

In basic picture–riddle activities, with learners in groups of four, I often use the following roles:

- the "dicto-freak" (the child who looks up words in the dictionary and says "XXX" means "XXX");

- the writer (the child who takes notes);

- the "trained seal" (the child who says, upon hearing German, "I don't speak German" and makes seal sounds);

- the presenter (the child who describes the picture to the others).

These roles are all tied to a language-related job (not just timekeeper or manager), and sometimes I put stickers on the learners with their jobs written on them so they "live" their jobs.

PROPS

Occasionally, I bring in my hat collection (I have a bag of hats, such as a chicken head, but origami paper hats work just as well). I give one hat to each group (our classes run up to 24 learners, so I need about eight hats). The person speaking can wear the hat, and the children *all* want to speak because they all want to wear the hats. This idea also works with simple props such as sunglasses, scarves, or plastic microphones—learners "become" something or someone when they have a simple character adaptation through a prop. It takes only one small item to become an English-speaking self.

CHANTING TO YOURSELF

I noticed once that when the learners were cutting out memory cards (with a picture on one card and a sentence or description on the other card—I avoid using single words), they

switched to the local language. So the next time we did this, I said, "Now take your cards back to your seat. As you cut them out, sing to yourself, under your breath, 'I'm cutting out my memory cards' at least 20 times!" I had the language on the board, and I modeled it and did a quick choral drill. Lo and behold, the kids stuck to English and even chatted with their neighbors in English until they were finished.

CLASS EVALUATION CHART

At the end of the lesson, learners rate their amount of English use. If they feel, as a group, that they did a fine job, they get a star. When they get ten stars (or whatever goal is set), then they can choose a fun game to play or story to hear (in English, of course). Similarly, there can be a side for the teacher—if the learners feel that the teacher used English consistently, then the teacher gets a star!

PEOPLE IN THE CLASSROOM: POSTERS, PUPPETS, BAGS, LIFE-SIZE CARDBOARD CUTOUTS

I have a bag with a picture of Greta Thunberg on it. The learners are informed that Greta speaks only Swedish or English. When I hear learners switching to German and no longer trying in English, "Greta" wanders over and sits in front of them and says she wants to be included in the conversation, too. This works really well, and you can always find a picture of an English-speaking person whom the learners react well to and glue it on any paper bag. When I started teaching English, I often had a poster of a famous person (Hannah Montana at the time), and this worked, too, but the bag can be placed in front of the learners as a gentle reminder, and it is closer than a poster. Other teachers I have seen have used puppets (such as Paddington Bear), and a Finnish teacher I observed had a cool punk-rock puppet that her 12-year-olds reacted

well to. They all wanted to speak with the puppet, and that can be complicated in a class of 24. However, the puppet in the classroom is a nice reminder to use English.

I hope these ideas will help you find ways of encouraging your learners to use the target language without punishing the use of the local language. Enjoy!

REFERENCES

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. 2010. *Position statement on the use of the target language in the classroom*. https://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/use-the-target-language-the-classroom

Butzkamm, W. 2003. We only learn language once. The role of the mother tongue in FL classrooms: Death of a dogma. *Language Learning Journal* 28 (1): 29–39.

Macaro, E. 2001. Analysing student teachers' codeswitching in foreign language classrooms: Theories and decision making. *The Modern Language Journal* 85 (4): 531–548.

Laura Loder Buechel is a teacher trainer at Zurich University of Teacher Education in Switzerland. Her research interests include the role of teacher language proficiency in relation to learner performance and standards-based grading, but her main passions are practicing what she preaches in the elementary school classroom and convincing university students to think outside the box.

Developing Fluency through Oral Reading

by ETHAN M. LYNN

Since becoming a TESOL professional, I have had a strong interest in reading. In Grabe and Stoller's (2011) book geared toward teachers, I came across two intriguing studies. One study found that word-level, sentence-level, and passage-level fluency were strongly predictive of reading comprehension (Klauda and Guthrie 2008). The other study found that students who engaged in oral repeated readings coupled with extensive reading significantly improved their reading abilities when compared to peers who did not engage in those activities (Kuhn et al. 2006). With these two studies fresh in my mind, I applied them to my teaching context: novice to intermediate students in an intensive English program.

I developed three sets of oral reading activities, which are described below. Each set focuses on one of the three types of fluency: word-, sentence-, and passage-level. The word-level fluency activities are best employed as part of the pre-reading phase of a reading activity. The sentence- and passage-level fluency activities are best done in the post-reading phase—that is, after students have read the text multiple times and after comprehension questions have been answered and reviewed. The entire text or sections of the text can be used for the activities, depending on text length and students' reading speed. The activities are meant to be repeated three to five times, with the students' engagement and motivation as a barometer.

I have found it helpful to occasionally change student groupings and pairings before subsequent repetitions of the activity. While most of the activities involve students competing against one another to read the fastest, the activities can be modified to engage slower-reading students, those intimidated by competition, and introverted students. Therefore, in addition to asking students to compete to be the fastest, I encourage students to compete against themselves by having them time each iteration with the hopes of reading faster on subsequent attempts. Finally, because this is a fluency activity, I do not explicitly emphasize accuracy.

These activities can be used with English learners at nearly any language level and typically require five to 15 minutes of class time. Materials needed are a reading text for each student—a text already used for classroom instruction is strongly recommended—and, for some of the activities, an audio recording of the text with the means to play it or a teacher to read the text aloud. A timing device might also be needed.

The main goals are to promote oral reading fluency and to engage and motivate students with productive, game-like activities.

The procedures for the activities at each level follow. These activities are meant to be discrete and stand-alone—not steps to be followed in order. Thus, teachers are free to pick and choose which ones they will employ.

WORD-LEVEL FLUENCY

1. Put students into pairs or groups of three. Students in each partnership alternate reading one word at a time out loud. Each partnership or group competes to finish before the others.

2. Students work alone or in pairs. If alone, students read the passage

> **A text already used for classroom instruction is strongly recommended.**

backwards and out loud while trying to be the first to finish. If in pairs, students alternate reading the passage backwards, one word at a time and out loud, with the goal of finishing before the other pairs.

SENTENCE-LEVEL FLUENCY

1. Put students into pairs or groups of three. Students in each partnership alternate reading one sentence at a time out loud. Each partnership or group competes to finish before the others.

2. Read the text out loud or play an audio recording of the text. Pause after each sentence. Students read the previous sentence out loud chorally. Continue until the end of the passage.

PASSAGE-LEVEL FLUENCY

1. Students individually read the entire passage out loud with the goal of being the first to finish.

2. Students individually time themselves reading the entire passage out loud and record their time. They repeat this with the goal of reading faster on subsequent attempts.

3. Students individually read out loud as much of the text as possible in a given amount of time. After time expires, they mark the last word they read. Then, with the same time limit, students repeat the activity from the beginning of the passage with the goal of reading more on subsequent attempts (see Anderson 1999).

4. Read the text out loud or play an audio recording of the text. Students chorally read out loud and in synchronization with the teacher or recording. On subsequent iterations, the pace of the teacher or recording can be increased (I recommend VLC media player for adjusting the pace of a recording; free downloads are available at www.videolan.org/vlc/). If students find the pacing too fast, they can read along silently.

To ensure that these activities provide maximum benefits for students and teachers, I want to emphasize a few final points:

- The sentence- and passage-level activities are best done in the post-reading phase. This means that students have read the passage multiple times (preferably three to five) and thoroughly analyzed answers to comprehension questions. In other words, these activities serve as a supplement to typical in-class reading instruction.

- While fluency is the focus, comprehension and accuracy should not be completely disregarded. If teachers want to include comprehension and accuracy, they can ask a follow-up comprehension question or two

> **The main goals are to promote oral reading fluency and to engage and motivate students with productive, game-like activities.**

> **These activities serve as a supplement to typical in-class reading instruction.**

after each iteration and/or set a minimal standard for oral reading intelligibility. To ensure that intelligibility standards are met, teachers would do well to visit each group at least one time during the activity if possible.

- I have observed high levels of engagement and motivation even though students take turns reading in some activities. For example, students regularly follow along when it is not their turn because each turn is too short to permit temporary disengagement, and the competition motivates students to have the fastest transitions possible.

- These activities can occur directly after regular reading activities or a day or two later as a means to review previous material. If teachers wish to use these fluency activities as a review, asking comprehension questions after each iteration may be beneficial. A simple way to ask a follow-up comprehension question is to present the question orally or on the board in writing and ask each group to write the answer on a piece of paper after completing the reading. The teacher can then quickly verify answers by making a short visit to each group.

- The ideal group size is two, with groups of three used only when an odd number of students are in the class.

Overall, these fun, fast-paced activities serve as an engaging way to maximize reading instruction.

REFERENCES

Anderson, N. J. 1999. Improving reading speed: Activities for the classroom. *English Teaching Forum* 37 (2): 2–5.

Grabe, W., and F. L. Stoller. 2011. *Teaching and researching: Reading.* 2nd ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Klauda, S. L., and J. T. Guthrie. 2008. Relationships of three components of reading fluency to reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 100 (2): 310–321.

Kuhn, M. R., P. J. Schwanenflugel, R. D. Morris, L. M. Morrow, D. G. Woo, E. B. Meisinger, R. A. Sevcik, B. A. Bradley, and S. A. Stahl. 2006. Teaching children to become fluent and automatic readers. *Journal of Literacy Research* 38 (4): 357–387.

Ethan M. Lynn, a native of Cincinnati, Ohio, is a PhD student at Northern Arizona University and a graduate teaching assistant at the Program in Intensive English.

> **These activities can occur directly after regular reading activities or a day or two later as a means to review previous material.**

Embracing the Growth Mindset in the Classroom

by NGUYEN DOAN HANH NGUYEN

High expectations for academic achievements. An emphasis on results.

Those are some of the pressures students face, and in my experience, they cause some students to consider almost any mistake they make to be a sign of failure. It is sad to see how kids, once being curious about the world, can become afraid of learning new things because of a fear of making mistakes.

As a teacher, I ask myself, "What can teachers do to reorient students toward progress, nurture their beliefs about effort, and teach them learning strategies upon facing setbacks?" One possible answer is to teach the growth mindset explicitly in the first lesson and reassert this throughout the school year.

According to Dweck (2006), "growth mindset" refers to the belief in the malleability of intelligence; those who have this mindset seize challenges and failures as opportunities for the growth of intellect. Dweck also proposed the "fixed mindset"—the belief in static intelligence; someone who has a fixed mindset would consider a failure to be not an opportunity, but a threat.

BENEFITS OF A GROWTH MINDSET

While students with a fixed mindset tend to give up easily on challenging problems or might even cheat in an effort to get high scores, students with a growth mindset own their knowledge and actively engage in the learning process (Dweck 2006). With a similar starting point in their academic profile, students with a growth mindset later outperformed those with a fixed mindset (Yeager and Dweck 2012).

By teaching students about the concept of growth mindset and ways to cultivate it, teachers can enhance the students' academic progress (Dweck 2006). This article offers

"What can teachers do to reorient students toward progress, nurture their beliefs about effort, and teach them learning strategies upon facing setbacks?"

concrete ideas to help teachers foster the growth mindset explicitly among their students. The lesson is flexible and can be applied to all levels, but I have had particular success using it with adolescents.

PROCEDURE

The lesson typically lasts 30 to 45 minutes. The steps are as follows:

1. Ask students what they do to stay strong (e.g., do physical exercises, play sports). Follow up by asking whether they can stay strong without doing anything. (The answer is "No.")

2. Tell students that our brains need to stay strong by doing exercise, too. Ask them an open question: "How can the brain do exercise?" Encourage students to suggest answers.

3. As a further answer to that question, lead to the video "Growth Mindset for Students" by ClassDojo. The video is available at http://bit.ly/2kHSGO8. (If you are unable to access the video or show it to your class, you can either read or have the students read the summary of the video, in Figure 1 on page 34.) For low-level students, you can pre-teach the vital vocabulary and phrases in the video, and while playing the video, you can consider breaking it into chunks, then repeating and/or explaining the dialogue to make sure students understand. For higher-level students, it's up to you whether to show the English subtitles. Remember that the main purpose of this lesson is to raise students' awareness of the growth mindset, not to test their listening skills.

4. Discuss the video with the students. You might want to guide the discussion with these questions:

   - Why does Mojo want to leave school? Do you sometimes have the same feeling that Mojo has?

   - What does Katie say to Mojo to convince him not to leave?

   - Do you think Mojo can improve in math? Why or why not?

5. Introduce the terms *mindset* (in this case, it refers to how we think about ourselves and our ability), *growth mindset* (people believe they can learn anything through their dedication and effort, so they are not afraid of mistakes), and *fixed mindset* (people think they have a certain, limited amount of ability, so they are often scared of making mistakes). Give an example of a student having a difficult English test and what the student would say if he or she has a growth mindset vs. a fixed mindset:

   - "I'll use some of the strategies I have learned so that I can improve." vs. "I give up."

   - "What should I do next time to improve my English?" vs. "English is not for me."

   - "I'm going to figure out how others can excel in English." vs. "Everyone can do the test well except me."

6. Divide the class into groups of no more than three or four students. Let them categorize given behaviors into either growth mindset or fixed mindset.

Introducing the growth mindset to students is just one step toward unleashing their potential in the classroom.

Make sure that groups can come up with an explanation for each choice. The listed scenarios, below, are some that I created for my classes, inspired by those at San Diego Unified School District (2019), where you can find more scenarios. You can adjust them or create a new set based on your students' English level. Again, although students will use English to read and discuss the scenarios, the purpose of this activity is to let students evaluate the scenarios and understand the relevant concepts.

A. Felix is getting frustrated with a grammar exercise he is working on. He slams his pencil down, and the teacher comes over to him. She asks Felix what is wrong, and he replies, "I hate English. I am not smart enough to do this."

B. Leon gets high scores regularly in his weekly math assessments. When he comes home, he shows the results to everyone, sticks them on the refrigerator, and tells everyone how smart he is.

C. Tim is getting frustrated with the presentation he is working on. English is not his best subject, and he knows that he needs to ask for help. He calls his friend and says, "I followed the guidelines, but the ideas and organization don't look good. Could you listen to my presentation and help me improve it?"

D. Today is the first day of your new soccer team's season. After the match, on the way home in the car, you burst into tears and say that you never want to play again. You tell your mother that you didn't score, while your friend scored two goals.

E. Thuy is a talented student. She always earns a grade of A in English. When she comes home, after a vocabulary test at school, she tells her parents that it is not about the outcome of the test but about the effort she puts in learning all the words and how to use them.

F. Tony loves to play the violin, but he knows he needs to practice a lot to play well. Unfortunately, this week he didn't have much time to practice. When his violin class starts, he tells his teacher, "I was not able to practice much this week. Could we practice the difficult parts together today, and next week I will practice the whole song again?"

7. Tell students to work in their groups and convert the scenarios that show a fixed mindset into scenarios showing a growth mindset. If you like, you can have some groups share their ideas in a whole-class discussion.

8. Give students reflection time by asking them the following questions:

- What parts of English/English skills do you sometimes feel frustrated by?

- Can you improve yourself in those areas? How? (Possible answers: Do homework and learn vocabulary from the previous lessons; complete extra assignments; read more English books, stories, and articles; join an English speaking club at school; etc.)

9. Turn the "How?" question above into a goal-setting session. Have students make a list of three to five goals they want to achieve in the current semester, along

Mojo is a friendly monster who loves school, especially math. One day, something happened to him that he thought was terrible: the math problems got harder and he couldn't solve them. Mojo had a terrible thought: "I'm not smart enough for school! I should pack my things and leave forever."

Just then, he heard his friend Katie laughing and saying, "Mojo, you can't just give up."

Mojo said, "I have no choice. You are either born smart or not, and I realize today that I'm not."

Katie said, "Mojo, that's not how it works. Anyone can become better, and you just have to work at it. Your brain is like a muscle. When you try challenging things, like those hard math problems, you're giving your brain the exercise it needs to get stronger."

Mojo said, "Oh, is that really true?"

"Of course," said Katie. "It's like when you were a baby, and you didn't know how to talk. But you kept trying and exercising your brain until you could."

Mojo couldn't believe what he was hearing. If the brain is really like a muscle, does that mean anyone can learn to do more and more things, even him?

What do you think?

Figure 1. Summary of the lead-in video, "Growth Mindset for Students"

with their action plan for achieving them. Let students write the list on the first page of their notebook so that they can always see their goals. While students are writing, teachers can walk around, ask guiding questions, and make sure the goals are specific and realistic.

10. *Optional extension*: Group students and have them prepare a role play in which students convert a fixed mindset into a growth mindset upon facing challenges. Students can then role-play their scenarios for the class while others point out the statements and actions that reflect a fixed mindset or a growth mindset.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Introducing the growth mindset to students is just one step toward unleashing their potential in the classroom. Teachers can then implement the growth mindset in daily interaction through subtle verbal feedback, such as giving a compliment on academic achievement, or by restructuring their lessons, as teachers' behavior in the classroom can strongly influence children's mindset and motivation (Aronson, Fried, and Good 2002; Masten 2001; Mueller and Dweck 1998).

Suggested follow-up actions are as follows:

- Throughout the school year, provide students with time for self-reflection about the progress they have made toward achieving their goals in learning English. Let them revise their action plan for reaching their goals.

- Display posters showing the definition of *growth mindset* and quotations that illustrate the concept as reminders of the mindset students should have in the class. Consider asking students to create posters presenting

what they understand about the growth mindset and the fixed mindset.

- Celebrate progress. If possible, in your assessment criteria or your management for rewards in your class, add a criterion for demonstrating the growth mindset and good behavior. As the growth mindset will be a new concept for most students, when you reward or give a compliment to students, do it publicly in front of the class and state the reasons why you are rewarding or complimenting the students. This action will help reinforce the growth mindset among students.

- Create high standards and a nonjudgmental atmosphere in the class. Students need to be aware that they will be challenged, but at the same time, they will get support from you and their peers.

- Compliment students' behavior, not their characteristics—for example, say, "That is a smart choice" instead of "You are so smart."

- Focus on progress, not the result. Instead of saying, "Yeah, that's right," say, "I notice you chose to use the guess-and-check strategy, and in the end, you got the right answer!"

- Encourage students by adding the word *yet* to any negative remarks they make. For example, if a student says, "It's too hard. I can't do it," you can turn the sentence into "I can't do it *yet*." Remember to emphasize the word *yet* when you say it. Let students repeat the sentence with *yet* until adding it becomes their habit.

- Acknowledge challenges and constantly remind students that mistakes are a normal part of learning.

- Reinforce purposeful and meaningful effort to foster the learning process. In other words, be mindful when you praise a student's efforts. Avoid making students feel good at the moment by saying, "Just try your best!"; if effort is unproductive and does not yield good results, it might even demotivate students in the long run. Instead, provide constructive criticism, appreciate their work, and add, "Let's talk about what you've done and what you can try next."

REFERENCES

Aronson, J., C. B. Fried, and C. Good, 2002. Reducing the effects of stereotype threat on African American college students by shaping theories of intelligence. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 38 (2): 113–125.

Dweck, C. S. 2006. *Mindset*: *The new psychology of success.* New York: Random House.

Masten, A. S. 2001. Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist* 56 (3): 227–238.

Mueller, C. M., and C. S. Dweck. 1998. Praise for intelligence can undermine children's motivation and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 75 (1): 33–52.

San Diego Unified School District. 2019. "Period 2 Day 3 CC Curriculum." Accessed October 28, 2019. https://www.sandiegounified.org/schools/hoover/period-2-day-3-cc-curriculum

Yeager, D. S., and C. S. Dweck. 2012. Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational Psychologist* 47 (4): 302–314.

Nguyen Doan Hanh Nguyen is a visiting fellow at the English Language Centre in the City University of Hong Kong. Her current professional interests are learner autonomy and blended learning.

The classrooms at Lycée Jacques Rabemananjara are just off the beach, 25 meters from the Indian Ocean. A wired, slatted fence separates the beach from the school buildings and keeps out some of the windblown sand. We are in Toamasina, the second-largest city in Madagascar, yet there are no sounds of traffic, only the voices of 10th- to 12th-graders, and every 30 seconds or so, the thundering boom of a wave rolling over. Nobody at this secondary school notices that noise. It happens every day, all day.

Josiana Andriantsalama (left) and Niry Razafimamonjy at the entrance to their school, Lycée Jacques Rabemananjara, in Toamasina

Lycée Jacques Rabemananjara … is the largest secondary school in the country, with over 4,000 students.

Niry Razafimamonjy and Josiana Andriantsalama share teaching duties for one group of the English Access Microscholarship Program at Jacques Rabemananjara. Access, as the program is usually called, is a U.S. Embassy–sponsored program in which teens receive two years of after-school English instruction with a focus on career skills, collaborative learning, project work, and critical thinking.

Josiana is a recent pedagogical university graduate and just started teaching in 2018, but she has leaped into the profession fearlessly. In addition to Access, she teaches seven English lessons per day at Jacques Rabemananjara, and these she supplements with a few classes at other schools. Though her father works as a bricklayer, her mother is also a teacher. "Actually," she says, "there are many teachers in my family. Like my grandparents, my uncle, my aunt as well." She prepares her lessons at home in the evenings. She has no time for going out. "I'm really busy," she says. "It's really tiring, but I love it."

In contrast, Niry, Josiana's Access teaching partner, is anything but new to the profession.

Niry has been teaching for 30 years and training teachers for 20. She is currently the director of Toamasina's Teaching Resource Center. The center is under renovation, but when it is functioning, Niry says that it helps "English teachers from public and private schools to cope better with their work. They can borrow books, documents. They can record listening cassettes, and mainly they can ask for advice about the teaching points with which they have problems." In the past, when funding was more abundant, Niry traveled to schools in order to observe and advise teachers. Often these schools lay in far-flung villages. After all, Madagascar is big, about the size of France. "We even went to remote places by boat," she says. "We sometimes walked or rode motorbikes." Sometimes schools had just one English teacher.

Lycée Jacques Rabemananjara, on the other hand, has a dozen or more. It is the largest secondary school in the country, with over 4,000 students. Still, classrooms here are basic: blackboard and chalk, a wet rag to clean the board. No glass covers the windows, only wooden latticework or shutters. The doors stay open and suck in the cool breeze. Often

Pousse-pousse drivers gather at the beach facing the Indian Ocean outside Lycée Jacques Rabemananjara.

A slatted fence separates Lycée Jacques Rabemananjara from the beach and the Indian Ocean.

there is no electricity or even working lights. Students sit two, three, even four at wooden desks with attached benches. Regular classes are stocked with upwards of 70 students. The secondary-school English curriculum is new, designed in the last several years, and features not only dialogues and grammar but also games. Josiana has found ways to integrate into her classes favorite activities such as miming and guessing or reading aloud.

Happily, the Access program is capped at 25 students. The smaller class size is a luxury for Niry and Josiana, and it gives them flexibility.

On the Saturday in May 2019 when I observe the class, the Access teachers arrange the wooden desks into a U-formation, transforming the middle of the classroom into open space, what I think of as the "dance floor" setup. That kind of space is always helpful and, in a *four-hour* lesson, crucial.

The lesson is kind of a fast-paced variety show. Students learn about professions and careers, not only developing vocabulary, but also expressing opinions about potential future jobs. They use their imaginations, too. At one point, Niry gives each student a card with a profession written on it. In this role play, each student has to talk to several others, asking questions and conjuring details about that job. This is all done in a *mingle* format (see *English Teaching Forum*, Volume 52, Number 2, for

more on mingles), with all students on their feet and wandering around the dance floor, finding speaking partners.

Traditional English classes around Madagascar use mostly the grammar-translation method. Usually there aren't any textbooks. Much of the time, the teacher writes sentences on the board; learners copy them into notebooks. Group work and pair work are rare. A mingle is rarer still. One teacher, in fact, from a school in another city, informed me that "it is impossible to move students around in a large class. It is dangerous. It disturbs the neighbors." It certainly is more difficult with 70 students than with 25, but not impossible.

Josiana demonstrates this with her Brain Break activities at intervals during the lesson. Students stand—even classes of 100 can stand up—and engage in breathing and stretching exercises to get the blood flowing. Josiana also likes Simon Says, an excellent listening-comprehension game that can get entire classes doing physical actions, right near their desks.

Niry and Josiana keep the students busy throughout the lesson, trading off activities, a coordinated team. They have prepared ahead by talking out the Access themes by telephone. Niry usually takes the Wednesday afternoon class, and Josiana takes Saturdays. Josiana admires Niry's knowledge and breadth of experience; Niry likes working with Josiana "because she's young and has a sense of initiative and some vision."

They enjoy speaking activities, which many teachers in Madagascar avoid because classes are large or because they don't speak much English with students, using instead Malagasy or French.

French is built into the Malagasy education system. (*Malagasy* is the word used to describe

> **"I've always said to my students, when you meet someone in the streets, they're not going to tell you, 'Put this sentence into the past' or 'Put this sentence into the negative.' But they are going to ask you, 'Where is the library? Where is the town hall?'"**

things of or from Madagascar, such as the people or language.) Or you might say that Malagasy education is built around the French system, nearly 60 years after independence. Both are official languages, but all instruction, except Malagasy language, is delivered in French—rather suddenly—beginning in grade three. English is not introduced until grade seven, and then only a few hours a week. "Consequently," Josiana says, "when they [the students] arrive at school, their English level is very low." However, attending secondary school is a success in itself: the average adult in Madagascar completes only 4.4 years of schooling (see https://www.unicef.ca/en/dorlys-journey-a-lesson-in-determination).

In secondary school, all students study English a couple hours per week. In grade 12, they take the all-important Baccalauréat exam, known as *le bac*, just like in France. Depending on which educational focus students choose, *le bac* may include or exclude English. Many

students will not be motivated to learn English if it doesn't appear on their exams.

Still, Josiana says, in Access, "We speak only English." Niry adds, "I've always said to my students, when you meet someone in the streets, they're not going to tell you, 'Put this sentence into the past' or 'Put this sentence into the negative.' But they are going to ask you, 'Where is the library? Where is the town hall?' You need not just practice but also production. You need to express yourself."

The Access students were clearly glad to be expressing themselves, even on a Saturday. When the lesson finished, they stayed. They were in no hurry to leave.

Malagasy students are accustomed to lengthy school days. To my astonishment, I learned that classes normally start at 7 a.m. and end at 6 p.m. There is a break of either two or three hours in the middle of the day, during which most students go home. There's no cafeteria

Niry and her students exchange information in a mingle activity.

A classroom at Lycée Jacques Rabemananjara

or café at Jacques Rabemananjara, but you can buy snacks in front of the school. Those who live far away must stay in the classrooms with food they've brought from home: perhaps a dollop of *ravitoto* (crushed cassava greens), or *mofo* (deep-fried fritter), or a piece of fruit, but certainly a large clump of rice. Rice is fundamental. In the Malagasy language, the verb for "to have lunch meal" translates as "eat rice."

Since no one was in a hurry to start the journey home, we all went to the beach to take photographs. After photos, we walked back along the sandy paths between the classrooms and the broad-leaved trees to the metal gate at the entrance to the school. The Access students waved good-bye here and headed up the sandy lane toward the cross street that runs parallel to the beach and heads to the center of Toamasina. Walking is how most students get to school. There are no school buses. Some may take a motorized *tuk-tuk*; others ride the *pousse-pousse*, a two-wheeled, manpowered rickshaw and the cheapest form of public transport. After dropping off passengers at the school gates, *pousse-pousse* runners like to roll to the end of the road to look at the ocean and have a chat.

A *chalet* at Lycée Jacques Rabemananjara, where students relax or study on their own during breaks

Josiana (far left) and Niry (far right) join their students after class for a photo session on the beach, with their school in the background.

Niry has noticed some changing attitudes about English. "When I first arrived [in Toamasina] 20 years ago," she says, "it was not like that. But now many people want to learn English. And there are many private courses here. Maybe that's why our students are keen on learning English, because they know they have some future in mastering English. Together with mastering computers, they have the future in their hands."

Many students want to go on to university, but the truth is that if their families need them, they must find work, usually as unskilled laborers, helping in the fields or in a market.

It was a long day for me, too. I had flown to Toamasina in the morning, leaving my hotel at 4 a.m. But I would get a chance to see Niry and Josiana one week later in the capital, Antananarivo, fondly known as Tana.

In May 2019, the U.S. Embassy in Madagascar staged the largest training of English teachers that the country had seen. The "21st-Century English Teaching Skills Symposium" involved nearly 400 teachers from all 22 provinces of the country. There were 35 workshops over a two-day period, on subjects such as incorporating group work; managing large classes; and using board games, music, movement, and simple writing tasks. Niry and Josiana came by car to Tana, a ten-hour

trip. Traveling in a car wasn't so bad. Some Malagasy English teachers from farther afield started their journeys on foot or by ox cart before hooking up with a *taxi-brousse*, a minivan.

"How was it—the Symposium?" I asked Josiana and Niry in a letter afterward. "Was there anything new or inspiring?"

Josiana answered that "the techniques shared were just amazing. I'm already applying some of them."

Niry wrote: "I've been a teacher trainer for 20 years but I realize that I still need help. There are still many different new ways to teach English that I do not know. Teachers are eternal students."

This article was written by **Kevin McCaughey**, a Regional English Language Officer (RELO), currently at the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, Serbia. From 2016 to 2019, Kevin worked as RELO in Pretoria, South Africa, advancing teacher development in Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean, including Madagascar. Kevin is fond of using movement and games in the classroom. He has written a book about the use of dice as gaming tools for learning English, and he writes and records his own (often silly) songs.

Photos by Kevin McCaughey

"What Should I Do?": Three-Part Role Plays

LEVEL: Lower Intermediate and above

TIME REQUIRED: About 30 minutes

GOALS: To practice describing a problem and asking for advice; to use level-appropriate language (imperatives, modal verbs, semi-modal verbs, etc.) to give advice in a specified context; to give and receive feedback from peers

MATERIALS: Chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers; pencils or pens and paper; a clock or other time-keeping device; a bell, whistle, or other signaling device

OVERVIEW: Role plays can be used to practice conversational skills at all levels. They are also excellent opportunities for learners to rehearse the interpersonal communication skills required in English for Specific Purposes settings, as mentioned in the article "Case Studies in ESP Course Development" on page 2.

This activity is a fresh take on the classic role play. In groups of three, students take turns completing three tasks: asking for advice, giving advice, and giving feedback to peers. The activity offers a variety of language-practice opportunities and is well suited for larger classes where the teacher cannot give feedback to each student. Teachers can adapt the role-play activity for almost any level or content area by writing advice-seeking prompts that include recently taught course material. The example role-play situations shared in this article are for a Medical English setting. Prompts for other levels and content areas are included in the Additional Prompts section.

PREPARATION:

1. Prepare four course-relevant prompts about situations that require someone to ask for advice. Each prompt should be relatively short (so you can write it on the board quickly) but interesting (so students will be able to discuss it for a few minutes). The first prompt will serve as an example during the activity explanation; students will use the other three prompts—Prompts A, B, and C—as they complete the activity. See the Additional Prompts section on page 51 for a selection of adaptable prompts.

    *   If desired, you can write these prompts on the board before class and cover them with paper so you can reveal them quickly as the activity progresses.

    *   As an alternative, you can photocopy the prompts, cutting up or sorting the copies so that the activity prompts (A, B, and C) are on separate slips of paper. During the activity, distribute the prompts so that everyone in each three-person group has a different prompt (A, B, or C). If you use this approach, student positions in relation to the board are not important, but the students should not show each other their prompts during the role plays.

    If necessary, plan to present or review new or less-familiar vocabulary used in the prompts before beginning the activity.

2. Consider your students' proficiency with using advice-related language. As needed, prepare to review the use of modals, semi-modals, and imperatives in advice situations before beginning the activity. You can find information to support and prepare your students in the Scaffolding Suggestions: Language Focus section.

3. Consider your students' comfort with giving each other feedback. If your students don't have much experience providing peer-to-peer feedback, review the Scaffolding Suggestions: Task Focus section and think about how you will prepare your students to give helpful, positive peer feedback.

PROCEDURE:

1. Tell students they are going to participate in role plays about giving advice. If you want, you can warm up for the role plays by leading a few simple advice-giving examples with the full class. For instance:

   a. Ask students, "If a friend says, 'I'm always tired,' what advice would you give her?" Elicit possible responses from different students.

   b. Ask students, "If a friend told you he is always getting in trouble for being late to class, what advice would you give him?" Elicit a few possible responses.

2. Invite three volunteers to the front of the class to model the role-play activity as you explain the instructions.

   a. Direct the first student, the **Advice Giver**, to sit or stand facing away from the board (tell the Advice Giver not to look at the board at any time). Ask the second student, the **Advice Requester**, to sit or stand facing toward the board. Tell the third student, the **Feedback Giver**, to sit or stand to the side with pencil and

paper so he or she can easily observe the other two.

   b. Explain that the Advice Giver is a doctor who must help the patient, the Advice Requester, who is seeking suggestions for the problem that will be shown on the board. Tell the class that the Feedback Giver will observe their interaction and make notes about the language they use and how the two people interact in this professional situation. You can ask the Feedback Giver to make notes about grammar and vocabulary use, pronunciation, the Advice Giver's professional demeanor and nonverbal communication, and any other communication aspects that are relevant to your course goals. Advanced students can give feedback on several aspects of communication and language use; however, for lower levels, consider limiting feedback to one or two focus areas.

   c. Write or uncover your example role-play prompt on the board: *You have had an itchy, runny nose for the past week. You have also been sneezing a lot, but otherwise you feel healthy.*
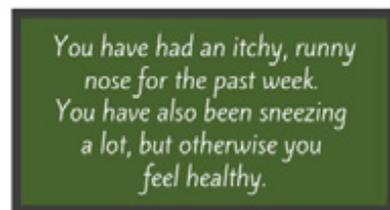
Figure 1. Student Positions and Role Responsibilities

d. Ask the Advice Requester (the patient, in this example) and the class to silently read the prompt on the board and think about how to explain the problem to the Advice Giver (the doctor, in this example).

e. Explain these steps and allow the modeling students to demonstrate; offer the students supportive reminders, questions, and hints from classmates, as needed:

   i. To begin, the Advice Giver will greet the Advice Requester and ask about the problem. (Example: "Hello. How are you? What brings you to the clinic today?")

   ii. Next, the Advice Requester will briefly explain the problem. (Example: "I've had a runny nose for the past few days … ")

   iii. The Advice Giver should listen and ask follow-up questions to gather information about the problem. (Example: "Have you been coughing, too?")

   iv. The Advice Requester can be creative and make up additional information to answer questions about the situation. (Example: "Yes, I've been coughing at night.")

   v. When the Advice Giver has sufficient information, he or she should offer advice about how to address the situation. (Example: "You should drink a lot of fluids.")

   vi. The Advice Receiver can ask the Advice Giver clarifying questions about the advice. (Example: "What kind of fluids are best?")

f. After the interaction, ask the Feedback Giver to share his or her notes about the encounter. Provide feedback on these comments and solicit additional feedback from the class.

g. Explain that the groups will perform similar role plays for three situations. Tell students that they will rotate roles each time so that everyone has a chance to be the Advice Requester, Advice Giver, and Feedback Giver.

3. Put students in groups of three; you can assign groups or allow students to choose their own groups. Tell the groups to select their roles for the first role play and to position themselves to begin the activity. If the prompt is written on the board, remind students that the Advice Giver must sit or stand facing away from the board.

4. Write or uncover Prompt A on the board: *Your wrist is swollen, and it is difficult to move your hand. You think you may have been bitten or stung by something while you were hiking yesterday afternoon.*

a. Signal students to begin.

b. The three group members perform their roles as modeled in Step 2. As the class works, move around the room, answering questions and helping students stay on task. You can also note common errors or issues to discuss later in a whole-class feedback session (Step 8).

c. The Advice Requester and the Advice Giver continue the role play until you signal them to stop (after approximately 3 or 4 minutes).

d. The Feedback Giver gives feedback to the other two students about their interaction, highlighting the feedback items you specified (approximately 1 or 2 minutes).

5. Gain students' attention and tell them to rotate positions and roles in their groups for the next role-play situation.

a. When students are in their new positions, write or uncover Prompt B on the board: *You hurt your knee in a motorcycle accident several days ago, but you continued to walk on it. Now it is swollen and painful.*

b. Repeat Steps 4a to 4d.

6. Gain students' attention and tell them to rotate positions and roles for the final role play.

a. When students are in their new positions, write or uncover Prompt C on the board: *You have been vomiting for the past 24 hours, have a low fever, and cannot keep food down. You often suffer from indigestion, but you rarely vomit.*

b. Repeat Steps 4a to 4d.

7. Tell students to return to their seats.

8. Ask students to share strengths and weaknesses they noticed about the role-play interactions while acting as the Feedback Giver. Offer feedback regarding common strengths or mistakes across the class.

VARIATION

Student-written role-play prompts

Rather than supplying students with the role-play prompts, have each student prepare a classroom-appropriate request for advice that is relevant to your course content. Before Step 3, give students time to think about a problem that would require them to ask for advice; students may make notes about the problem if needed. When it is their turn to play the role of Advice Requester, they should be prepared to describe their problem to their Advice Giver partner.

EXTENSIONS

Comparing and evaluating advice

After the activity concludes, put students into three groups based on their Advice Requester prompts. (For the examples above, one group would be students who said they have a swollen wrist, another would be students who hurt their knee in the motorcycle accident, and the last group would be those who are vomiting.) Ask students in each group to share and discuss the advice they received and to decide which advice was the best. In addition to comparing and evaluating the advice they received, students can practice reporting what another person has said: for Prompt A, a student might say, "The doctor told me to put ice on my wrist and take allergy medication."

Advice reactions

After the activity concludes, ask students to write a paragraph summarizing the problem they shared while playing the Advice Requester role and the advice they received. Students can then explain whether they agree with that advice or whether they would have recommended something different in the situation. This extension gives students the chance to practice an additional grammar point: the second conditional (e.g., *If this situation happened to me, I would … *).

SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTIONS

Language Focus: Asking for and Giving Advice
There are several advice-related grammatical forms in English. Figure 2 gives examples of how modal verbs, semi-modal verbs, and imperatives can be used to give and request advice. If needed, you can display this chart or create a handout for students to refer to as they complete the role plays, or you can review the chart with them before the activity, encouraging students to give additional examples for each form.

Task Focus: Giving Feedback to Peers
The feedback-giving aspect of this activity will work best if your students are accustomed to providing peer-to-peer feedback. Prepare students to give each other feedback by highlighting these three elements of effective feedback:

Effective feedback is …

- **Framed positively:** It can be upsetting to receive feedback that focuses only on mistakes and errors. Encourage students to start their feedback with a positive comment, then comment on errors, and close with a suggestion for improvement.

- **Specific:** Saying only "Great job" or "You made a lot of mistakes" isn't very helpful. Students should listen carefully for their peers' strengths and possible areas of improvement so that they can give detailed and specific advice.

- **Brief:** Students can't comment on everything their peers said and did. It's better to select a few important areas to focus on.

For example, a student might say, "Your pronunciation was clear, and you nodded to show you were listening to the patient. Your

Giving and Asking for Advice		
Grammatical Form	**Use**	**Examples**
Modal Verbs		
should	Giving advice and making recommendations in either the present or past tense	*You should eat lots of vegetables.* *You should have brought an umbrella.*
	Requesting advice	*What should I do?*
must	Giving a strong recommendation with a sense of necessity, duty, or obligation	*You must stop eating sugar.*
would	Giving advice using the second conditional	*If I were you, I would bike to work.*
	Requesting advice using the second conditional	*What would you do?*
Semi-Modal Verbs		
ought to	Giving advice with a sense of moral obligation	*You ought to be nicer to your sister.*
had better	Giving advice with the sense that there will be a negative consequence if it is not followed	*You had better not park your car illegally.*
have to	Giving a recommendation with a strong sense of necessity, duty, or obligation	*You have to finish your assignment by 5 p.m.*
Imperatives		
[the base form of a verb]	Giving instructions or commands	*Take the bus.*
don't + [the base form of a verb]	Explaining behaviors to avoid	*Don't sit on the grass.*

Figure 2. Giving and Asking for Advice

advice was appropriate, but I noticed you started all your advice with 'You should to … .' You don't need to use 'to' after 'should.' In the future, you could try using more than one modal verb, maybe 'ought to' or 'have to.'" This feedback is positive; it focuses on specific strengths, errors, and areas of improvement; and it is succinct.

Be sure to remind students about effective feedback practices prior to beginning this activity. If your students aren't used to giving each other feedback, you can prepare them to give helpful feedback by doing the following:

- Explain the features of good feedback mentioned above and lead a short discussion about what kind of feedback students find most helpful.

- Give examples of ineffective feedback and ask students how to improve it by following the three feedback guidelines.

- Provide a short feedback form or graphic organizer that students can use to develop comments for their peers. See Figure 3 for an example

feedback form that could be used in a Medical English context. This form can be adapted for use in any context by changing the feedback areas in the first column. For lower-level students, you can reduce the number of items in the first column, asking them to focus on only one or two feedback areas.

ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

All of the examples in the Procedure section relate to Medical English. Below are prompts you can use or adapt if you teach in a different context. You can also write your own prompts to connect to whatever content students have studied recently. Students can also write their own prompts, as mentioned in the Variation section.

English for Business

- Example Prompt: *Your boss has asked you to lead a new project, but you don't have experience or expertise in the project's area of focus. You think you might not be the best person for the position.*

- Prompt A: *You have just received a job offer. You like the job, but you think the salary is too low. You would like to negotiate for a higher salary but aren't sure how to do so.*

- *Use the chart below to keep track of your peers' performance during the role play.*
- *Select the two to four most important areas to discuss with your peers.*
- *Start your feedback with a positive comment and end with a positive comment or suggestion for improvement.*

Feedback Area	Strengths	Things to Improve
Grammar and vocabulary		
Pronunciation		
Nonverbal communication and professional behavior		
Professional knowledge		

Figure 3. Example feedback form

- Prompt B: *You have a great idea for a new business, but you need investors. You aren't sure how to convince people to invest in your business.*

- Prompt C: *One of your coworkers often takes credit for the work you did. You don't think this is fair, but you don't want to cause conflict in your office.*

English for Law Enforcement
- Example Prompt: *The mother of a high school student just called to report that her son did not come home after school and is not answering his phone.*

- Prompt A: *You just saw a car drive through a red light at an intersection and speed away. This is on a street where many pedestrians are walking.*

- Prompt B: *You are patrolling a busy part of the city when you see a man knock down an older woman, grab her bag, and run away.*

- Prompt C: *You receive a call from a local secondary school saying that a fight between two groups of students has broken out in the schoolyard.*

English for Academic Purposes
- Example Prompt: *You are working on a group project, but you are doing more work than your partners. You don't think this is fair.*

- Prompt A: *You have been assigned a paper that is due in a few weeks. You are expected to include at least ten academic sources, but you don't know how to find relevant books or articles.*

- Prompt B: *Your professor gave an assignment during the last class session, but you don't understand what you are supposed to do. You have asked two friends about the assignment and got very different answers from each of them.*

- Prompt C: *You are feeling ill, but you have a midterm exam tomorrow. You aren't sure if you will feel well enough to do well on the exam, and it is worth 30 percent of your overall grade.*

General Intermediate English
- Example Prompt: *You asked a friend to return a library book for you, but the library says the book has not been returned. The library has charged you a fine.*

- Prompt A: *You have made plans to visit your sick grandmother this weekend, but a friend just invited you to a concert by your favorite singer.*

- Prompt B: *A friend is always asking you to borrow money, and she never pays you back. She just asked for money to buy lunch, and she seems very hungry.*

- Prompt C: *You stayed up late finishing your assignment for English class. Your friend says he didn't get a chance to finish and asks if he could copy your answers for the last half.*

General Advanced English
- Example Prompt: *You are visiting a nearby city with friends for the weekend. One of your aunts lives there, and your mother told her you would be coming to town. Your aunt invited you to her house for dinner, but you and your friends have other plans for the weekend.*

- Prompt A: *Your brother brought his new girlfriend home, and she was rude to you and your family. Afterwards, your brother said he plans to ask her to marry him, and he asked your opinion.*

- Prompt B: *Your cousin borrowed your car and got in a bad accident. He is okay, but the car is damaged beyond repair. You need to buy a new car, but you don't have the money. Also, your cousin's family is upset that you let him use your car.*

- Prompt C: *Your grandmother is ill and needs a family member to take care of her. She always supported your dream of studying and working in the city, and she is proud of you, but you are considering moving back to the small town where she lives to help her.*

This activity was written by **Tabitha Kidwell**, who teaches academic writing at American University in Washington, D.C. She has taught languages and trained teachers on five continents. Her research interests focus on language-teacher education, particularly how language teachers are prepared to teach about culture.

Medical Mix-Ups

Below are sentences and questions related to health and medicine. In each item, one word makes the meaning a little strange, but it rhymes with a word that makes better sense. Find the word that doesn't belong and then replace it with a rhyming word to produce a more meaningful sentence or question. For example, in the sentence "Eating too much candy made me feel stick," the word *stick* doesn't belong, but you can replace it with *sick*. Now try these:

1. I have a score throat, so I don't want to talk much today.

2. How many times a day do you blush your teeth?

3. We should exercise often to make our muscles and bones healthy and wrong.

4. I cut myself many years ago, and I still have a star on my hand.

5. I stayed home from school yesterday because I had a cold and a beaver.

6. Ouch! This bee string really hurts!

7. One way to prevent malaria is to sweep under a mosquito net.

8. I tried a new kind of soap, and now I have a crash all over my skin.

9. My friend explained her ankle while she was playing soccer.

10. My father has to take medicine to control his high bud pressure.

11. You'd better put something on that cut so that it doesn't get inspected.

12. On my way home, I need to stop at the pharmacy and get my description filled.

Write your answers here:

1. Change _____ to _____

2. Change _____ to _____

3. Change _____ to _____

4. Change _____ to _____

5. Change _____ to _____

6. Change _____ to _____

7. Change _____ to _____

8. Change _____ to _____

9. Change _____ to _____

10. Change _____ to _____

11. Change _____ to _____

12. Change _____ to _____