

## Preliminary remarks

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### Objectives

The aim of the workshop is to analyse the emotional and creative aspects of learning. Through a creative and emotionally charged approach the teacher can turn a traditional lesson into an exciting activity, making the didactic content interesting and relevant for the students.

The activities presented are strongly influenced by progressive trends and theories in education developed by accredited linguists (*Multiple Intelligences* by H. Gardner and others; *Acquisition versus Learning* by S. Krashen; *The Lexical Approach* by M. Lewis, *Sound Foundations* by A. Underhill).

The approach taken is holistic, so the activities presented are designed to engage the students as a whole – physically, emotionally and rationally.

The focus is on ACQUISITION as opposed to LEARNING, as I believe that L2 teaching should focus on encouraging “natural” acquisition by providing input that stimulates the learner emotionally.

The aim is to allow the students to acquire the linguistic skills they need for communication without necessarily realizing they’re learning. Of course, this does not mean that there is no room for conscious learning in the classroom, but it is worth bearing in mind that a mixed approach may be more effective.

Part of the workshop looks at how to plan a CLIL module. An important session is devoted to showing an alternative approach to teaching pronunciation, as it is a very important aspect of L2 teaching.

The final aim is to explore different ways of teaching while sharing and exchanging experiences within the group.

## **Ice-breaking activities**

### **Activity 1**

**Time:** 2-3 minutes

**Format :** in pairs

**Task:** Introduce yourself to your partner

**Follow up:** each person tells the rest of the group all about her partner

**Aim:** to get to know each other and chat in English

### **Activity 2**

**Time:** 2-3 minutes

**Format:** in pairs

**Task:** Talk about your teaching experience during the current school year, but use NO LANGUAGE just BODY GESTURE

**Follow up:** individuals are called to the front to mime their feelings and the rest of the group has to interpret the gestures and put them into words

**Aim:** getting to know each other by using body language and putting one's own creativity to work

### **Activity 3**

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Format:** individually

**Task:** think of a metaphor for the role of the L2 teacher

**Follow up:** individuals are called on to share and discuss with the others the metaphors they've come up with

**Aim:** to encourage participants to use their creativity and practice different means of expression

**Outcome:** metaphors mentioned by participants included a sunbeam, a storm, a volcanic eruption, a coach, a captain in command of a ship, a scientist.

## **Acquisition VERSUS Learning**

**Introduction:** Krashen states that the best method for language acquisition is to supply relevant and comprehensible input in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear.

**Activity:** Acquisition VS Learning

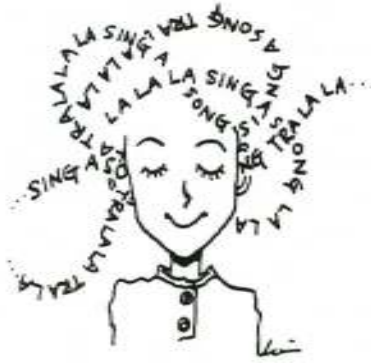
**Time:** 10 minutes

**Format:** the whole group exchanges opinions while TT jots down the main points on the whiteboard

**Task:** identifying the differences between learning a language and acquiring a language

LEARNING	ACQUISITION
Conscious	subconscious
Formal situation	Informal situation
Uses grammatical rules	Uses grammatical “feel”

## The song-stuck-in-your-head Phenomenon



(source: *Language Hungry* by Tim Murphey)

**Introduction:** songs are a fun way to reiterate language in a low anxiety environment.

Have you ever had a piece of song echoing in your head, which you can't stop? And even if you don't like it a line or two keep on repeating themselves in your head?

Teachers can help their students a lot by playing songs at the end of classes or during lessons. This is productive for several reasons:

**Recycling** - one of the keys to learning with songs is taking small chunks (lexical approach) and recycling them, or else transferring what you are learning in the songs to a real situation.

**Speed** - songs run at about half the speed of normal speech. This is not caused by slower pronunciation, but by longer pauses between phrases. These pauses may allow us to echo the phrases in our minds.

**Repetition** - the language in songs is often simple and characterized by heavy repetition. The amount of repetition makes it easier to retain.

**N.B.** So most songs are extremely well suited for language learning because they are simple, repetitive, fun, slow, short, and emotionally charged and can add variety, play and love to language learning. Even university students enjoy English children's songs. Singing a song is like being a native speaker!

**N.B.** a word about the lexical approach. The theory behind the lexical approach is that fluency doesn't depend so much on having a set of grammar rules or a separate stock of words as on having rapid access to a stock of chunks. In fact native speakers have a vast stock of lexical chunks. Thus it's important to help students develop their stock of phrases while spending less time on grammatical structure.

## **CREATIVE SONGS**

### **variations on a given song**

**Time:** 30-40 minutes

**Format:** groups of 4

**Task:** create your version of the song *"The Boogie Woogie Washer Woman"* by retaining the framework but changing the subject, words and actions.

**Outcome:** participants perform their version in front of the class

**N.B.** These variations, written and mimed by the participants, were handed in to me at the end of the workshop to share. Remember that you could get your students to make up variations of their own, based on specific themes. Make sure they create "actions" to go with the songs.

#### **Group 1**

##### **Down by the moon**

Down by the moon  
Where rockets land  
There's a big awful alien jumping around  
With a jump, jump here  
And a jump, jump there  
The big awful alien hops everywhere  
Jumping, jumping, jumping yeah! (x3)  
The big awful alien jump everywhere

#### **Group 2**

##### **Down by the forest**

Down by the forest where nobody lives  
There's a very hairy silly monkey jumping through trees  
With a jump, jump here  
And a jump, jump there  
The very hairy silly monkey jumps in the air  
A monkey, monkey, a monkey, hurray! (x 3)  
A very hairy silly monkey jumps in the air, yeah!

#### **Group 3**

##### **Down by the jungle**

Down by the jungle where animals go  
There's crazy red parrot eating a carrot  
With a crunch, crunch here  
And a crunch, crunch there  
The crazy red parrot's eating a pear  
A crazy, a crazy, a crazy, yeah! (x 3)  
The crazy red parrot's eating a pear, yeah!

## **Phonetics**

### **Making Pronunciation Physical**

**Introduction:** The aim is to make pronunciation not just a mental and cognitive activity but a physical and visible activity that can be introduced to students of different levels and become a powerful teaching tool in language classes. It is also designed to help the teacher to develop their own awareness of pronunciation and discover new and practical ways of responding to learners' pronunciation needs. The idea is to make pronunciation **physical** and **visible** as well as **audible**.

**FEEL – Physical:** getting pronunciation to “work its way out of the head and into the body” by focusing on muscle movement and becoming aware of where the muscles are and concentrating on their movements in order to develop muscular memory.

**SEE – Visible:** Muscles work by moving and when they move they become visible. So it's important to train the eye to see sounds (a capacity that is rarely used in language teaching, even though it is commonly used around the world by the deaf); also by **miming** with the mouth and making **gestures** with hands and body to help make sounds visible (i.e. rubber band for long/short vowel sounds).

**HEAR – Audible:** students don't work with the more traditional model of rote repetition but develop their awareness of muscular activity and perception of what is visible. This makes them more alert and more engaged as , in addition to hearing sounds with the ear, they can see movements with the eye and feel the muscles moving.

**Advantages:** activities that encourage awareness give learners a way of intervening in their own pronunciation and enable them to discover things they can do to change the way they produce a sound or stress a syllable.

**Example of activities done:** a sequence of activities to encourage awareness of tongue position, lip position, jaw position, lip rounding/spreading, tongue forward/back, voice on/off, etc.

#### **Consolidation activities:**

##### **Activity 1: Vowel sound race**

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Format :** in pair or groups of 3

**Task:** SS identify vowel sounds by competing in a race with a prize at the end for those who finish first.

**Aim:** develop vowel sound awareness.

##### **Activity 2: Minimal pairs /l/ and /i:/**

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Format :** individual work

**Task:** SS practice minimal pairs. TT reads out a series of specific words and SS write them down correctly based on the sound they think they hear.

**Aim:** develop short/long vowel sound awareness since these, when pronounced incorrectly, can make one word sound like a completely different one.

##### **Activity 3: Several minimal pairs**

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Format:** in pairs or groups of 3

**Task:** SS practice minimal pairs that Italian speakers generally find difficult to distinguish.

**Aim:** develop awareness of several minimal pairs, which again, when pronounced incorrectly, can change the meaning of a word.

##### **Activity 4: pronunciation poem**

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Format :** in pairs

**Task:** SS listen to a pronunciation poem in the podcast and complete a comprehension activity

**Aim:** to highlight several salient aspects of English pronunciation

## **Creative Games**

### **variations on “Captain’s Coming” action game**

**Introduction:** Game-based activities are good for reinforcing lexis, grammar functions and structures by adding an element of fun and emotional involvement. Here we add an element of creativity by asking SS to actively engage in making their own version of the game with a chosen topic.

The variations below were handed in to me at the end of the workshop. Remember that to create variations of this game from a didactic point of view you could change the setting and the instructions accordingly. For example, you could set it in a house with commands and actions referring to the interior ( i.e. *it’s lunch time!* – the students go to the kitchen and eat around a table).

This is only an idea but you could use only action verbs for younger students (i.e. *run!*, *walk!*, *crawl!*, *hop!* etc.) or go over numbers (i.e. *groups of 7!* – students gather in groups of 7 and whoever’s out or last is eliminated).

#### **TEACHER’S COMING**

- Teacher’s coming! (stand completely still)
- Pay attention! (N.B. you can only use this command after *Teacher’s coming!* and it allows players to move after standing to attention. Should they move before this command they’re out).
- Take notes (pretend you’re writing and taking notes)
- Sit down
- Stand up
- Have a break (pretend you’re eating a snack whilst doing an eating action with noises to match)
- Clean the blackboard (get into pairs with one student being the blackboard the other cleaning the board)
- Make a circle (get into groups of four hand in hand forming a circle)
- Stand in a line! (line up in single file)
- Sweep the floor (pretend you’re holding a broom and make a sweeping motion)
- Tidy up
- Pack up your bags

#### **TEACHER’S COMING**

- Teacher’s coming! (stand completely still)
- Listen!(hand on ear. This command allows players to move after standing to attention)
- Open your book (pretend you’re opening a book with your hands)
- Read your book (pretend you’re reading by moving head from right to left)
- Write on the board (get into groups of 3. Two students pretend to be the board by holding hands and spreading arms out, whilst the other student writes on it)
- Glue a photocopy (pat the palm of your hand on to the other hand)
- Cut the paper (move forefinger and middle finger as though they were a pair of scissors)
- Can I go to the toilet please? (press palms together as though pleading)
- Play together (stand in a circle of 5)
- Throw the paper in the bin (mime the action)
- Sing a song (mime the action)
- Sit down (get into groups of 3. Two students make a chair and the other sits on it)
- Line up in twos (hand in hand)

**N.B.** more such game-based activities and action songs were handed out and practiced by the participants during the workshop.

## **Lesson Planning**

**Introduction:** the following are several examples of lesson plans handed in at the end of the workshop. In planning the lessons we tried to bear in mind an interesting trend in education that is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). In addition to that we tried to apply the theory of multiple intelligences (H. Gardner) that is based on the idea that learners have different learning styles and that the most successful lessons will touch on a variety of styles.

### **GRUOP 1**

**CLIL MODULE:** P.A., SPORT

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### **CLASS PROFILE**

- Year 2 : a class of 25 pupils

### **OBJECTIVES/AIMS**

- Understand commands
- Follow instructions while following an obstacle course prepared before the start of the lesson
- Learn specific action verbs
- Revise prepositions of place: in, on, under

### **EVIDENCE**

- During the gym session SS follow the T's commands correctly.

### **MATERIALS AND PREPARATION BEFORE THE LESSON**

- a wide range of props available in the gym (footballs, hoops, bean bags, quoits etc )
- set out an obstacle course in the gym

### **SELF REFLECTION TASKS**

(to be completed as soon as possible after the lesson)

- Did you achieve your aims? If not, Why?
- Were the materials appropriate?
- What was your overall impression of the lesson?
- What went particularly well?
- Is there anything you would do differently in the future?
- Were all the students fully involved ?
- What are going to be your follow up actions next lesson?



## PROCEDURE AND STAGES

<b>TIME</b>	<b>10'</b>
<b>STAGE</b>	<b>WARMER</b>
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>Gym session:</b> SS spread out in front of the T, each holding a hoop. SS follow the teacher's commands ( i.e. put the hoop on..., in..., under..., jump in, jump out of the hoop, etc). T. repeats instructions faster or slower.
<b>AIMS</b>	SS became familiar with prepositions of place
<b>INTERACTION</b>	SS spread out in the gym in front of the T.
<b>CLASSROOM LANGUAGE</b>	Are you ready to move your body? Look at me, listen carefully, spread out nicely, give yourself some space and do as I do.

<b>TIME</b>	<b>15'</b>
<b>STAGE</b>	<b>GUIDED PRACTICE</b>
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	SS line up and do the obstacle course moving according to the T's commands.
<b>AIMS</b>	SS practice prepositions of place and actions.
<b>INTERACTION</b>	Work alone; add an extra element of competition by having 2 benches and 2 groups of SS.
<b>CLASSROOM LANGUAGE</b>	Now you are going to follow an obstacle course listening to my instructions; pass under the bench, jump over the bench, move to the right; to the left, etc.,

<b>TIME</b>	<b>5'</b>
<b>STAGE</b>	<b>CONSOLIDATION</b>
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	SS play a variation of "Simon says" following the commands introduced during the lesson.
<b>AIMS</b>	consolidate new lexis, prepositions, action verbs
<b>INTERACTION</b>	work alone
<b>CLASSROOM LANGUAGE</b>	now let's play "Simon says"; look at me; ready, steady, go!

<b>TIME</b>	<b>10'</b>
<b>STAGE</b>	<b>CONSOLIDATION</b>
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	Sing a song: "Here we go Looby-Loo"; "Hokey, Cokey"
<b>AIMS</b>	consolidate and practice action verbs, preposition
<b>INTERACTION</b>	SS standing in a circle with the teacher
<b>CLASSROOM LANGUAGE</b>	And now let's sing a song together

## GROUP 2

### CLIL MODULE: Geography (Great Britain)

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#### CLASS PROFILE

- Primary 5 /Year 6 (1st year of Italian Middle School): 25 students (13 girls, 12 boys), 1 dyslexic, 1 special needs, 4 other nationalities

#### OBJECTIVES/AIMS

- Recognize and name the British countries on the map
- Recognize and name different flags
- Recognize and name different capital cities
- Recognize and name different geographical features (mountains, rivers, lakes, islands, seas, etc.)
- Recognize and name the cardinal points
- Revise prepositions of place (on the right/left, in the middle, next to...)
- Revise present simple and *Wh*-questions

#### EVIDENCE

- SS are able to recognize, name and find places on the map
- SS (even weak students) assemble a jigsaw map of the UK

#### MATERIALS AND PREPARATION BEFORE THE LESSON

- a large blank map of the UK
- different flags representing different regions
- jigsaw representing the map of the country
- postcards of the different cities
- post-its, pins, fly swatter

#### KNOWN LEXIS AND GRAMMAR

- simple present
- *Wh*-questions
- Some prepositions of place
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#### ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS

- Some SS might find it difficult to memorize all the cities or geographical features and locate them on the map

#### SAFETY-NET ACTIVITIES

- Colour a map according to the T's instructions (colour coding different countries)

## PROCEDURE AND STAGES

TIME	5'
STAGE	WARMER
PROCEDURE	<b>Game:</b> "Queen's coming" (a variation of <i>captain's coming</i> ). T gives the following instructions: <i>Queen's coming!</i> (stand to attention); <i>God save the Queen!</i> (at ease); <i>Big mountain</i> (3 SS together to form a mountain); <i>A flag</i> (pretend you're waving a flag); <i>A river</i> (the whole class in a line, the last to join in is out); <i>Island</i> (stand on your own); <i>Shark in the sea!</i> (pretend you're a shark);
AIMS	SS warm-up and introduce the topic
INTERACTION	SS spread out at random
CLASSROOM LANGUAGE	Are you ready to play a game? Look at me and listen carefully. Whoever makes a mistake is out

TIME	20'
STAGE	GUIDED PRACTICE
PROCEDURE	SS work in groups of 4 and have to assemble a jigsaw map of the UK and label the geographical elements and capital cities
AIMS	SS learn to recognize and label different regions, cities, etc.
INTERACTION	Group work

TIME	20'
STAGE	CONSOLIDATION
PROCEDURE	T. prepares a set of questions and organizes a group competition
AIMS	consolidate new lexis and geographical knowledge
INTERACTION	work in groups

TIME	10'
STAGE	ROUND UP
PROCEDURE	SS play a game "The fly swatter game".
AIMS	Consolidate the names of countries, regions, geographical features and locate them correctly on the map
INTERACTION	Make 2 teams and line them up in 2 separate lines. As T. asks a question (i.e. "where's the river Thames?"), the first person from each team in line must run up to the map to hit it in the right spot. First team to do it correctly wins a point. Increase the difficulty by asking the person who hits the right spot an extra question in order to gain an extra point for the team
CLASSROOM LANGUAGE	And now let's have a competition. The winner is the team who gets the highest score

### GROUP 3

**CLIL MODULE:** Science (vertebrate, invertebrate animals)

**N.B.** as yet to be submitted by participants

#### PROCEDURE AND STAGES

TIME	
STAGE	WARMER
PROCEDURE	
AIMS	
INTERACTION	
CLASSROOM LANGUAGE	

TIME	
STAGE	GUIDED PRACTICE
PROCEDURE	
AIMS	
INTERACTION	

TIME	
STAGE	CONSOLIDATION
PROCEDURE	
AIMS	
INTERACTION	

TIME	
STAGE	ROUND UP
PROCEDURE	
AIMS	
INTERACTION	
CLASSROOM LANGUAGE	

## **REFLECTION TASK**

**Introduction:** as with any professional teacher training course, time should be set aside to reflect on what has been done in order to give the brain the chance to process, elaborate, absorb all the information and make it one's own.

**Aim:** to reflect on the workshop session

**Time:** 30-40 minutes

**Format:** Groups of 4-5 participants

**Length:** maximum one page

### **Reflection questions:**

- What is the purpose of reflecting on the work done during the workshop?
- What new concepts or strategies have you learnt about L2 teaching?
- Which activities during the session were most useful to you? Why?
- Which concepts have been easy for you? Which concepts have you found challenging?
- Has the workshop experience inspired you to introduce changes into your own teaching approaches? If so, how?

**The following notes were handed in to me at the very end of the workshop and represent the outcome of the participants' group work.**

### **Group 1**

The workshop introduced us to a huge variety of concrete ideas which are not common but that we could use in our own teaching. In particular we found very clear and useful the strategies on how to use phonetics in the classroom. The idea of making sounds visible was very impressive (i.e. miming a "rubber band" or chewing gum stretching from your lips to show the difference between long and short vowel sounds in English).

The songs were very nice and funny and so the lessons weren't boring, but enjoyable.

We hope to attend similar courses in future.

### **Group 2**

1. To consolidate new ideas and promote self-awareness of the activities done
2. Creativity, movement, emotional involvement
3. Use the body to introduce new vocabulary and practice it in a fun way. Different ways of using songs and action games
4. Easy concept: using the body, miming. Challenging concept: phonetics
5. All the activities have been really interesting and motivating and useful for creating a good learning atmosphere but it could be quite difficult to organize them with large classes, given the limited space of our classrooms.

### **Group 3**

1. The purpose of this activity is to reflect on the work done in order to become more aware of it and acknowledge it consciously
2. We learnt by doing while having fun (i.e. games and songs with actions, words and sounds linked with gestures)
3. The most useful activities were pronunciation activities, songs and games
4. The easiest activities were games, the most challenging was making a lesson plan
5. We'd like to introduce some phonetics and pronunciation activities in our teaching