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Sharing is Learning -Teachers' takeaways from the China NODE (National Online Development of English Teachers) CPD Project

Activity Booklet

May 2023

Introduction

The activities provided in this booklet offer a sample of the engaging classroom ideas shared and experimented with by teachers on Year 1 of the NODE (National Online Development of English teachers) project conducted in collaboration between the British Council and CEAIE (China Education Association for International Exchange). The activities have been collated by UK experts from ELT-Consultants, who delivered the NODE CPD activities, and the booklet is intended to offer a platform for teachers to further experiment with these and other activities in their classrooms – or, we hope, to encourage new and improved ideas that better meet the need of local students.
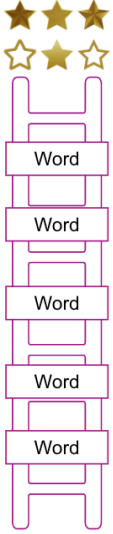
We are confident that this short booklet can be a source of inspiration, discussion, and idea development that teachers can 'take away' and use to help make their language classes more engaging and motivating for their students.

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Activity 1

Name of activity	**The next level**
Introduction to activity	Telling stories is engaging and creative. This activity focuses on production skills (E.g., speaking and writing) within the context of story creation.
Learning objective of activity (teaching aims and demands)	*At the end of this activity Students will be able to:* • write a simple story using language learnt creatively through the activity. • work collaboratively with others. • self-assess their learning.
Importance and difficulties	This activity supports speaking English for communication and working together to create new ideas. It also includes being able to adapt ideas to the language learnt and work towards set goals.
Language goal	To review the language learnt so far and develop productive skills. This is a practice activity. The activity uses vocabulary students know or know of. They will have a chance to develop their writing more fluently and add creative thinking to their work.
Materials needed for activity	Learning resources: textbook - any level. A poster (E.g., A3 paper placed together) to stick all stories together; some glue or tape to stick stories to the poster; paper & pens

Steps to do the activity (Teaching Procedures)

Time	Steps
I. Set up	
3 minutes	Organise the students in 6/8 groups. Each group should have paper and pen.
II. Do	

25 - 30 minutes	• Display/draw a ladder with different words on each step.
	• <u>Tell the groups they will create a short story (80 words maximum) using the words on the ladder</u>. All groups can use the same words but create different stories. They can discuss and take notes to help them before writing. Then, they should go from bottom to top using the words in linked sentences to create a story. Students should also add linking words to help the story flow. When they get to the top of the ladder and finish the story well, they will get a 'next level badge' if the class can understand the story. The badge is the 'reward' for their efforts and acts as a motivator.
	• Show a <u>preprepared example</u> on the whiteboard/PPT as a model. E.g., show a ladder and sentences beside each word that use the words in the ladder to make a story.
	• <u>Assign a group leader</u> to lead the task in each group. Set a time limit (15 minutes) and monitor the groups as they prepare and write down their story on the paper given. <u>Support students and collect some recurring mistakes to discuss later.</u> When time is up, get the whole's class attention by clapping your hands/ playing a sound effect.
	• Each group then tells their story. The other groups listen and react: *Really? Amazing! Oh no!* and/or may suggest titles for the stories. <u>Alternatively, students can think of a question to ask each group about their story.</u>
	• Collect all stories on paper and stick them on a poster. Ask groups to read their favourite story on the poster aloud and draw a star.

III. Feedback

| 7 minutes | • With all stories on a poster, discuss good and bad points and agree with students if they are ready for the NEXT LEVEL. If so, write 'Next Level' on top of the poster. If not, do some remedial work and write 'Next Level' (two) weeks later. |
| | • The teacher can use the errors noted during the preparation stage to write incorrect sentences on the board and have the students correct them through elicitation (i.e., asking the students about the sentence and guiding their understanding – not simply telling them the answer). |

IV. Adaptation and extension ideas for the activity

| N/A | • Do the activity in pairs, and when finished have students place their work around the room. Other students can take 5 minutes to go around and read some and add stars to the ones they like.
• Students can pass their stories to the next group in a clockwise direction. The new group can correct any errors on the page and add comments either by writing on the story paper or adding sticky notes. |

	• The teacher may record the stories with her/his cellphone and use them as material for dictation (I.e., students listen and write down the story) or the basis of a role-play.

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Activity 2

Name of activity	Running dictation
Introduction to activity	Running dictation involves group work and physical movement in the classroom. It involves incorporating all skills (Reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and it is fun. But pay attention to safety!
Learning objective of activity (teaching aims and demands)	*At the end of this activity students will be able to:* • re-create a textbook text or other texts (E.g., sentences) by working collaboratively. • develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking during a motivating, fun activity. • allow students to self-assess their work.
Importance and difficulties	This motivates students by adding physical movement and competition to a textbook activity. Classroom organisation is key to avoid unnecessary noise and movement, and teacher must pay attention to rules and safety before the activity begins. E.g. no actual 'running'! The example below should take between 20 – 25 minutes but this can be extended to take up a full 45-minute class dependent on the activity design.
Language goal	Any level. There are multiple possible skills foci. Depending on the text and task used this activity can help students develop scanning and skimming, detailed reading, summarising and note taking, for example. The activity will generally review language and skills previously learnt or encountered. This is a practice activity, but it may also include new language that can be explored and understood through context.
Materials needed for activity	Learning resources: any textbook, any level. Teaching resources/texts: any text from any textbook, A4 sheet of paper per group and pens, blue tack/ sticky tape, cellphone for taking photos (if allowed), audio recording and timer.

Steps to do the activity (Teaching Procedures)

Time	Steps
	I. Set up

2 minutes	Organise the students in 6/8 groups or alternatively if space permits, in pairs. Each group should have multiple pieces of paper, pen, and textbooks handy. Assign key roles (**Pairs:** Writer/Runner; **Groups:** Leader, Writer; Checkers)

II. Do	
25 - 30 minutes	- Select a text from the textbook and copy each paragraph (or sentences depending on the level) onto 6/8 pieces of A4 paper (one paragraph per group). Put the paragraphs on the classroom walls. Assign each group a paragraph. - Assign roles: Runner: the person who will leave the table and read the paragraph; writer: the person who will write the text down; Checkers: (for groups) other students who will check grammar and meaning or re-write in a neater form/in the correct order). Tell students each group's runner will walk swiftly to the wall, read the paragraph, memorise a sentence, walk back and dictate it to 'the writer'. The other members should check meaning and spelling the text. Model the activity so everybody understands. To involve more students the 'Runner' could tag a different student to go each time. - Set the rules (no running, no pencils, no phones to take pictures of the text, no shouting) and the time (5 – 10 minutes for short texts) and say: "*Go!*" "All groups start 'running' and dictating back at their table. - As groups finish the task, (if time has not ended) stop the timer and ask groups to open the book and self-correct their paragraph against the original version. Then, they should walk round and check their text against the original version on the wall. Write the timing on the group's running dictation, if recorded. Teacher should note some of the common mistakes made as the students check their texts. - Take a photo of each group's running dictation text and timing next to original text to share on the class WeChat or another platform. - Groups take turns to read the paragraphs in the correct order. The teacher may record each group (audio). Or, ask students to complete this as homework.

III. Feedback	
5 minutes	Congratulate students on their performance and award each group a star for participation, with an extra star for the fastest group. Play the recordings (if made) and provide feedback on pronunciation, fluency, accuracy where needed. The teacher can also highlight some of the common mistakes in the texts and either ask the class to correct error sentences or elicit correct use/spelling.

IV.	Adaptation and extension ideas for the activity
	• This can be used as an information gap by giving students a larger text with pieces or gaps missing. The missing text can be placed around the room on small pieces of paper and the 'Runners' must find, read, memorise and report while the others/Checkers choose where that language should go in the gapped text. This provides a challenge to the reading and encourages students to think more critically.

Activity 3

Name of activity	Hot Seat
Introduction to activity	Hot seat is a popular game in which the person on the seat has to guess a word/phrase. It activates knowledge and integrates skills.
Learning objective of activity (teaching aims and demands)	At the end of this activity students will be able to: • lead in to and build understanding of a text from the bottom up. • review vocabulary and act out a dialogue from a textbook adding a gamification element. • support students to work collaboratively with others. • integrate reading, speaking and listening skills in a single activity.
Importance and difficulties	Speaking English for communication can be challenging and different students should be encouraged to speak, not only the strong students. This is especially important in a game where students are excited. Organising the classroom and materials for good classroom management is important. Consider how you will do this in advance of the activity based on your space. The example below should take between 20 – 25 minutes but this can be extended to take up a full 45-minute class dependent on the activity design.
Language goal	To review the language (e.g., vocabulary) and skills learnt so far. This is a practice activity.
Materials needed for activity	Learning resources: a textbook dialogue - any level (Ideal for primary level and short dialogues) Teaching resources: a chair, slips of paper, a dustbin, (perhaps) a cellphone to record students

Steps to do the activity (Teaching Procedures)	
Time	Steps
I. Set up	

2 minutes	Organise the students in 6/8 groups (or more for bigger classes). Each group should have paper, pen and textbook handy. From the class choose a person who will be in the hot seat. They should sit separately from the groups for the initial stage and can review the text. Place a chair in front of the classroom <u>facing the class</u>.
II. Do	
25 - 30 minutes	• Select a dialogue from the textbook and choose **6/8 key words** (one per group). Give one word to each group on a slip of paper. • Each group prepares clues to help the person on the hot seat to guess the word. e.g.: *Junhong plays this sport. <u>Rules</u>: students cannot say the word in English or Chinese, they cannot spell the word, they cannot say "the word begins with…"* • Set a time limit, monitor and support the groups with their clues. When the clues are ready have the 'hot seat student' sit down. • A student from each different group reads their clue. If the one in the hot seat guesses the word, the student in the group throws the slip of paper with the word to the dustbin as <u>a sign of accomplishment (gamification element).</u> Allocate a 45 second / 1 minute time limit for guessing to manage time and add motivation. Write down the times taken by each group on the board. • When all words are guessed, the students open the textbook and read the dialogue selected cooperatively (i.e., they all take part in reading aloud). As students go through the text, each group reads the lines that include the word on the slip of paper that they had. This can expand to choral reading (reading together, aloud) by the whole group. • The teacher may record the students for further motivation (audio).
III. Feedback	
5 minutes	Congratulate students on their performance and reflect on what happened during the class. Were the clues clear? Were they too difficult? Why was a word easy or difficult to guess? Also, note the times taken by groups on the board and elicit the fastest group (I.e., the winner) and thank the hot seat student! (If made) Play the recording and make comments (through asking students questions) on fluency, pronunciation, and language in general/make comments on recurring mistakes.
IV. Adaptation and extension ideas for the activity	

	- Have the students record audio of their group reading the dialogue and post via the class WeChat or another platform. - Each group has a member sit at the front. The teacher places 2 - 3 words per group on the blackboard and that group has to shout out clues (Same rules as above) to help their teammate guess. The time taken is recorded, as above, and the fastest group is the winner. - For online classes, a **<u>breakout room</u>** (i.e., a separate online room) can be used for the person in the hot seat. While waiting, the student may read the dialogue to get ready for guessing one of the words in the dialogue.

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Activity 4

Name of activity	**Creating a podcast**
Introduction to activity	A podcast is a voice recording. Creating a podcast involves reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It also involves using technology and creating a podcast community if online platforms are used.
Learning objective of activity (teaching aims and demands)	At the end of this activity Students will be able to: - create a podcast or recording using a common recording tool. - create a transcript and listen to peers' podcasts - integrate different skills (writing, speaking, listening, and reading) and personalise the textbook's content.
Importance and difficulties	This activity can be motivating students as they are creating their own content. Recordings should be planned in advance to avoid overlapping of voices. This activity may need some time outside of the classroom to prepare, including students making the recording - as mobile phones are often not allowed in the classroom. The activity may take a lot of class time, so it is important that the topic reflects the textbook focus and is relevant. To save time the recordings can be completed outside of class time.
Language goal	Any level. To review the language and skills already learned and develop fluency. This is a practice activity. In particular, the exercise offers free practice of productive skills, and the chance for students to use language more naturally.
Materials needed for activity	Learning resources: Any textbook Teaching resources: A cellphone or recording device per group; paper and pens. **Note:** If students are doing this outside of classroom a platform such as Tencent Meeting or Ding Talk could be used, and the 'podcast' recorded through the app. In this case, each student would need a cellphone or device to participate.
Steps to do the activity (Teaching Procedures)	

Time	Steps
I. Set up	
5 - 10 minutes	Organise the students in 6/8 groups. Each group should have paper and pen. Tell the groups they will create a short 'podcast' or radio show using their ideas. • Brainstorm ideas from the class on what a podcast might include, what kind of language, how people might interact. Write the start of helpful sentences on the board as a model to help students write their transcript but encourage students to use other language too. The podcast should end with a question, e.g.: E.g., Today we are going to talk about …. Most of us like this ……. *It is…….. People often ……… What is your favourite (festival)?* • Assign a group leader to lead the task and choose a writer to note down group ideas. Each group will write a transcript using the model as support (Try to set some rules, such as at least two turns per speaker in the transcript). **Note:** For higher level students they should only write short words or phrases to guide their speaking, not sentences. This will make it more natural and support their ability to give presentations.
II. Do	
25 - 30 minutes	• Elicit from the students what a podcast is. Ask questions about how people might speak in a pod cast, what language they might use. Brainstorm onto the board. • Select a writing activity from the textbook, e.g. write about your favourite festivity/place in the world/sport, etc. Have Ss write a podcast transcript based on that topic. • Set a time limit (10 minutes) and monitor the groups. Help students with the transcript writing where needed, but try not to disturb, if possible, to allow free writing.

	- When the time is up, get the whole's class attention by clapping your hands/playing a sound effect. - Choose some groups to read their transcript and check pronunciation. Then, <u>ask all groups to record each group with a cellphone or other device</u>. The teacher should also move around and note common errors students made. - <u>As homework, students should share their podcasts</u> on the class WeChat, or another platform, and the other groups will listen and answer the podcast question. They can also add other 'constructive' feedback i.e., something that can improve the podcast.
III. Feedback	
5 minutes	Congratulate students on their efforts and tell them what will happen next. E.g., In the next class (as an opening) you can: - Use delayed correction, by putting incorrect example sentences – based on the errors heard - on the board, and have the class correct them. Importantly, do not focus on all errors or slips (I.e., the students probably know it is a mistake, but in their excitement to speak they make a speaking error). Try to highlight common, deeper errors. - Provide written feedback: provide feedback on each written transcript (if available) - Repeat the exercise again but allow students freedom to choose and write the transcript on a topic they like.
IV. Adaptation and extension ideas for the activity	
	- Use the written form of the transcript only, and once complete each group can share the transcript with another group to 'act out.' The acting group can then give their feedback on the podcast transcript to the class - Have students record the podcasts before class and write out the transcript. Then, in class offer the transcripts to other groups to add their ideas and improve. The other groups can return the transcripts at

	the end, with their comments and improvements, and the original group can share what they think.