

# THE INGED NEWSLETTER



## *NEWS ON-LINE*

*Together we stand!*

Issue 3  
September 2019

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## From the President

Dear members,

In this issue, I want to share with you Andrew Wright's work entitled "Poetry: Writing and responding to poetry" that he sent me in April 2019.

According to Andrew Wright any rich use of words to express an idea can be defined as poetry as he believes that rhyming is only one way of using language richly. He states 'The expression of ideas and feelings in heightened language' can include skipping rhymes, football chants, proverbs, advertising, propaganda, speeches, quotations, poems written by students and teachers as well as the work of the world's great poets. The popularity of skipping rhymes, football chants and advertising language play shows that poetry is not just for toffs who want to study poetry at university! Using poetry is beneficiary as the intelligence of some students comes to life when they can enjoy the sound of words; and poetry makes language memorable. Students can play with words from their first few weeks of learning. When we ask our students to create something, we should let them publish it or perform it for other students in the class, for the school, for a parents evening, in book form, on a poster, on a website.

He suggests some ways of organizing poetry writing:

a) Writing your own poem: If the proficiency level of students may cause problems to find rhyming words, some activities related to rhyming words can be done beforehand.

b) Change or modify a poem: You can add, remove, or substitute words to change the sense of an existing poem. Students are then asked to do the activity. For example, you can ask our students to substitute the words in italic:

One *black* night  
After *mum* turned off the light  
I saw *a pink dwarf*  
But *the pink dwarf*  
Didn't frighten me.

Another possibility is to remove words and ask your students to guess the missing words. If necessary, you can give them a word list.

c) Jumbled poems: Two or three poems can be jumbled together, and students can be asked to sort them out and sequence each of them. Although this is not creating new poems there is an element of creative as well as intellectual involvement and it helps to get the student into a poem writing frame of mind.

d) Mixed-up poems: You can cut the poem into different verses or lines. Then you can ask your students to sequence them.

e) Finding pictures: Students are asked to find pictures on the web or picture postcards or draw their own pictures to illustrate particular content in a poem or to offer a setting for the poem. Depending on the level of the students, they can be asked to justify their choice of the picture related to the poem.

Andrew Wright suggests that the characteristics of poetry you might help the students to revel in are:

- **Rhythm** in a word or several words together.
- **Assonance**. Similar sounds echoing between two or more words. Sounds contrasting richly between words.
- **Alliteration** when the beginnings of several words have the same consonant.
- **Repetition**...such a simple idea and such a strong contributor
- **Metaphors and similes** when one thing is compared with another to highlight its quality
- **Intertextuality**....an idea or phrase given meaning in one context is used in another bringing an element of its meaning in its previous context with it.
- **Speed**...fluency or hesitation.
- **Volume**...
- **Tenor/manner...softness to harshness and stridency**
- **Pitch**...and variety of pitch
- **Chunking**...how you group the words between pauses...moments of silence
- **Communal sharing** oral and written sharing of poetry is ancient in society.

(For more information, you can visit [www.andrewarticlesandstories.wordpress.com](http://www.andrewarticlesandstories.wordpress.com) OR e-mail him at [andrew@ili.hu](mailto:andrew@ili.hu))

Scholars and researchers have been asserting that language teaching materials should be authentic, culturally meaningful and cognitively appropriate. Poetry presents an ideal medium through which students can learn and practice language in context besides improving their cultural and literary knowledge/understanding of the target community. Poetry also is an excellent means to help students understand that words have connotations and associations as well as denotations, and can operate at many levels. Poetry gives students a creative way to construct and express their ideas. As Brent & Felder stated (1992; Writing assignments: Pathways to connections, clarity, creativity. College Teaching, 40, 43–47) in classes that do not encourage or reward creative work, students are unlikely to develop or demonstrate their creativity.

As always - Together we stand!

Prof. Dr. Aydan Ersöz



## From the Editor

Dear Colleagues,

The end of summer is near and the end of holidays is definitely over for teachers. This is the time of year when teachers may benefit from ideas that they can apply in their classes, may they be new groups of students or familiar ones. That is why this issue welcomes you dear members with a large number of articles that aim to give you practical ideas to make your teaching easier and more efficient. The section **SELECTED FOR YOU** consists of 7 articles including topics such as building the sense of community in the classroom, setting up your elementary classroom for the first day in school, icebreakers and many more ideas that you can implement especially at the beginning of the year.

We are also getting closer to the INGED Conference date: 14 – 16 November! Our invited key note speakers include:

Prof. Dr. A. Amanda Yeşilbursa  
Asst. Prof. Ali Fuad Selvi  
Dr. Christine Coombe  
Dr. Deborah Healey  
Dr. Simon Phipps

For further details, please go to the website. We hope to see you at our conference in Ankara and wish you all the best for a successful and happy new academic year.

Warm regards,

A. Suzan Öñiz  
INGED Newsletter Editor

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE ???  
AN INGED AFTERNOON  
AND  
AN INGED EVENT**



**INGED Afternoons**

WHEN?	As frequently as there is a guest speaker available
HOW LONG?	Approximately two-hour meetings
HOW MANY PRESENTERS?	Only one guest speaker
TOPIC?	A practical session on a topic relevant to English language teachers.
FOR WHOM?	Open to all audiences whether they are INGED members or not.

**INGED Events**

WHEN?	As frequently as there are several guest speakers available on the same day
HOW LONG?	Approximately three to four hours
HOW MANY PRESENTERS?	More than two guest speakers
TOPIC?	One general topic or several separate topics relevant to English language teachers
FOR WHOM?	Mainly for INGED members
REQUIREMENTS?	Advance registration
FEE?	A reduced fee for INGED members
CERTIFICATE?	A Certificate of Attendance for INGED members

## FOR PROSPECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS

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The INGED Newsletter *News On-Line* appears during the first week of March, June, October, and December. The deadline for sending in your contributions via email is the end of the month preceding the deadline.

### **NOTES FROM A CONFERENCE**

Please state the title of the conference or event you are going to describe; your full name, title and affiliation; your brief description. The body of your description tells the readers the aims of the conference or seminar that you intend to report on and summarizes one or two of the sessions that you attended in such a way that readers feel that they were present at the session being described. Please include details so that your summaries have a practical function. You may include a brief section on how many people attended the meeting, where it was held and who the main presenters were but the focal point of the report is the summary of the sessions that you wish to share with the readers.

### **TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING**

Please state the title of the ideas that you are going to describe; your full name, title and affiliation; your step-by-step description, bearing in mind that some readers may be totally unfamiliar with the ideas that you are describing. Please specify the technical requirements and make sure that the websites that you mention are active at the date of submission. The technology that you choose to describe may be a tool that teachers can use directly in class with their students or it may be a helpful means for you as a teacher-researcher.

### **YOUR PAPERS**

Please send us your papers relating to pre-school through adult English learning and teaching. The accepted papers will be written in formal register with references and a following bibliography. Please make sure to spell check the document and proof read the final copy for accurate language use.

### **THE VOICE OF INGED MEMBERS**

This is YOUR page! Please send us news about your pupils and students, the latest developments in your teaching environment, teaching tips you would like to share with your colleagues, and comments.



**Please send us your manuscript  
AS A WORD FILE  
& WITHOUT ANY FORMATTING.**





# The 19th INGED International ELT Conference



Outside  
[THE BOX]



**Date:** 14-16 November 2019  
**Venue:** Atılım University, Ankara  
The School of Foreign Languages

**TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING:  
TECHNOLOGY AND SPEAKING**



**By  
Julie Vorholt**

<https://www.languagemagazine.com/2019/03/28/technology-and-speaking/>

***Julie Vorholt shares six activities to incorporate technology into your speaking class in any language***

Are you a speaking teacher who wants to use [technology](#) in class? Are you enthusiastic but too busy to research and decide the best next step? Are you ready to make a plan to include technology in more activities and in different ways in your speaking classroom? Most teachers would answer with a resounding “Yes!” to all of these questions. I often hear teachers expressing their interest in incorporating technology, but moving from a professional discussion of a hypothetical situation to teaching a successful classroom activity can be difficult. To streamline this process, I created the following list for teachers, a user-friendly menu of options that can help them choose their next steps.

**Six Technology Activity Types for Classroom Instruction**

1. Responding to materials found on smartphones
2. Recording on audio
3. Recording on video
4. Speaking via video
5. Presenting with software
6. Interacting with apps and websites

can reflect upon their background knowledge and comfort when deciding which activity type to try first. Of course, the decision will also be influenced by students’ pedagogical needs and the teaching context. An easy starting point is the first type; teachers may vary greatly in terms of their prior knowledge with types two through six. It all depends on the person. Ideally, a teacher will select one type and teach a lesson. Then the teacher can continue with that activity type or try a new one. Over time, some teachers will master all six types.

**What Inspired the Six Technology Activity Types?**

I developed this idea while editing *New Ways in Teaching Speaking* (second edition), which includes over 100 lesson-plan activities. Language-teaching professionals from around the world contributed activities that they have found successful when teaching speaking in their own classrooms. The substantial number of submissions that included technological tools led to the creation of a speaking and technology section in the book. It is organized

according to the skills that students are working on by using technology: developing fluency and accuracy, developing pronunciation, and improving their speaking for academic and professional purposes. However, the book does not provide direction for teachers who are ready to incorporate technology in ways that are new for them. The number of options can be simultaneously exciting and overwhelming. An action plan was needed. Thus, I created these six technology activity types, which are illustrated below with references to examples from *New Ways in Teaching Speaking*.

### **How Are the References to Examples Useful?**

They can provide a clearer connection between theory and practice. Commentary about each activity type is followed by an example of how a classroom teacher puts the activity type into practice in his or her language classroom.

They may initiate teachers' independent thinking about their current lessons and stimulate ideas about how to update those lessons with the addition of technology.

Following is each activity type with my commentary based on experiences using the activity type in the classroom. Also, an example or two of the activity type is given from the book.

#### **1. Responding to materials found on smartphones**

This activity type is the easiest because it does not require preparation and students use their own phones. They enjoy talking about the pictures they select to share. This activity can be repeated by giving students different types of pictures to find. Also, students can pull up more than just pictures. They can be set different tasks, such as locating specific information on websites. To reinforce additional skills and learning objectives, suggest that they locate a source connected to their current topic in reading class or a picture that illustrates a vocabulary word.

Activity: "Storytelling with Cell Phones"

Contributor: Robert J. Meszaros

Student Proficiency Level(s): All

#### **2. Recording on audio**

Students benefit from recording their voices, listening to themselves speak, and trying to improve their speaking. Many students like recording themselves. Repeating the activity provides them with multiple opportunities for self-assessment and improvement. For activities such as creating a podcast, giving students the option to publicly share their work can be very motivating.

Activity: "Smartphone Speaking"

Contributor: Marcella A. Farina

Student Proficiency Level(s): All

Activity: "Student-Generated Podcasts as Speaking Portfolio"

Contributor: Bitá Bookman

Student Proficiency Level(s): Intermediate to advanced

### 3. Recording on video

Students often watch videos on the internet and may already be recording and posting their own videos online outside of class for fun. They enjoy recording themselves and seeing how their classmates react. Some teachers have students plan and shoot a class video or organize a friendly competition between classes.

Activity: “Video Recording on Flipgrid”

Contributor: Laura Giacomini

Student Proficiency Level(s): All

Activity: “Star in a Viral Marketing Video”

Contributor: Sean H. Toland

Student Proficiency Level(s): Pre-intermediate +

### 4. Speaking via video

Most students are already adept at using FaceTime, Skype, or Zoom to speak with family and friends. This activity type brings that experience into the classroom. As more people take online courses and work remotely, the ability to speak confidently online in academic and professional settings is increasingly important.

Activity: “International Video Chats”

Contributor: André Hedlund

Student Proficiency Level(s): Beginner

### 5. Presenting with software

Although students may already be experienced with PowerPoint, they may not know about alternatives, like Prezi, and presentation formats, such as PechaKucha, which limits speakers to 20 slides that automatically advance every 20 seconds. Successful delivery using the PechaKucha format requires skill in both carefully planned speaking and impromptu speaking. If the timing does not go as planned, students must be ready to make impromptu comments. Students may benefit from a class discussion focusing on how to select the most appropriate software and presentation format for each situation.

Activity: “Improving Presentation Skills with PechaKucha”

Contributor: Suzan Stamper

Student Proficiency Level(s): Intermediate to advanced

### 6. Interacting with apps and websites

New apps and websites are launched daily, offering a multitude of resources that may or may not be created specifically for language learners. These resources can engage your students as they learn about the latest pedagogical resources.

Depending on the activity, no preparation is needed. Give students a meaningful question and see what they discover. Examples include:

“Find an app that you can use to practice pronunciation.”

“Find and introduce a website that you think everyone should know about.”

When students search in pairs or small groups during class, situations naturally present themselves as opportunities for discussion. This authentic context continues as students share their findings with the class.

For teachers who want the entire class to use the same app or website, preparation is required. It can be time-consuming to identify the best resources to enhance your students' learning and examine the resources' capabilities so you can introduce them to your class. However, this process has become easier due to the plethora of online reviews and social media pages. Teachers can communicate about their findings and troubleshoot together as a group, or "hive mind," if any challenges arise.

Activity with an app: "Pronunciation with Mobile Apps"

Contributor: Hoa Thi Thanh Bui

Student Proficiency Level(s): High beginner to intermediate

Activity with a website: "Google Earth Field Trip"

Contributor: Emma Tudor

Student Proficiency Level(s): All

### **Additional Information about Activities**

The following materials can be found on the TESOL International Association website.

For more information about the speaking and technology activities in the book, please go to: An overview of the book, including its Table of Contents (<http://blog.tesol.org/on-teaching-speaking-new-ways-in-teaching-speaking-2nd-edition/>)

The On Teaching Speaking blog, including posts such as "4 Benefits of Flipgrid Video Recording" (<http://blog.tesol.org/on-teaching-speaking-4-benefits-of-flipgrid-video-recording/>)

To read three sample activities from the section "Developing Fluency (Part I)," please go to: Three free activities ([http://blog.tesol.org/on-teaching-speaking-new-ways-in-teaching-speaking-2nd-edition](http://blog.tesol.org/on-teaching-speaking-new-ways-in-teaching-speaking-2nd-edition/)) for you to use in your classroom

In conclusion, we teachers want to continue growing professionally while maintaining high standards working with our students both inside and outside of the classroom. I hope that using these six technology activity types will help teachers to confidently experiment with new ways to teach speaking with technology.

### **References**

Vorholt, J. (Ed.). (2019). *New Ways in Teaching Speaking* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: TESOL International Association.

Vorholt, J. (2018). "On Teaching Speaking: New Ways in Teaching Speaking, 2nd edition." Blog post. <http://blog.tesol.org/on-teaching-speaking-new-ways-in-teaching-speaking-2nd-edition/>

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## ***SELECTED FOR YOU***

**In this issue of our newsletter, you will find articles that may come in handy for the beginning of a new year.**

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/welcoming-students-smile>

### **Welcoming Students With a Smile**

Greeting each student at the door with a positive message brings benefits for both students and teacher, according to a study.

By [Youki Terada](#)

A widely cited [2007 study](#) claimed that teachers greeting students at the classroom door led to a 27 percentage point increase in academic engagement. The problem? It included just three students.

Now [a new, much larger and more credible study](#)—comprising 203 students in 10 classrooms—validates that claim: Greeting students at the door sets a positive tone and can increase engagement and reduce disruptive behavior. Spending a few moments welcoming students promotes a sense of belonging, giving them social and emotional support that helps them feel invested in their learning.

The first few minutes of class are often the most chaotic, as students transition from busy areas such as the hallway or playground. Left unchecked, disruptions can become difficult to manage, but a proactive approach to classroom management can help students get focused and ready to learn. Rather than address disruptive behavior as it happens, proactive techniques—like greeting students at the door and modeling good behavior—reduce the occurrence of such behavior as teachers and students build a positive classroom culture together.

In the study, when teachers started class by welcoming students at the door, academic engagement increased by 20 percentage points and disruptive behavior decreased by 9 percentage points—potentially adding “an additional hour of engagement over the course of a five-hour instructional day,” according to the researchers.

Ten middle school teachers were randomly assigned by the researchers to one of two groups. The first group started class by greeting their students at the door, saying each student’s name while using a nonverbal greeting such as a handshake or nod. The teachers also used [precorrective statements](#)—reminders of what to do at the start of class like, “Spend the next few minutes reviewing what we covered yesterday.” If a student had struggled with their behavior the previous day, the teachers often gave a positive message to encourage them to improve.

Teachers in the second group attended classroom management training sessions offered by their schools, but they weren’t given any specific instructions on how to start class.

Researchers observed classrooms in the fall and spring, looking at academic engagement—how attentive students were to their teacher or classwork—and disruptive behavior, including speaking out of turn, leaving one’s seat, and distracting classmates. Both measures improved in classrooms where teachers greeted their students, confirming what many teachers already know: Meeting students’ emotional needs is just as important as meeting their academic needs.

“The results from this study suggest that teachers who spend time on the front end to implement strategies such as the PGD [positive greetings at the door] will eventually save more time on the back end by spending less time reacting to problem behavior and more time on instruction,” the study authors write.

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY**

Why do positive greetings work? When teachers use strategies like this, they help “establish a positive classroom climate in which students feel a sense of connection and belonging,” the study authors write. “This is particularly important considering the research demonstrating that achievement motivation is often a by-product of social belonging.” In other words, when students feel welcome in the classroom, they’re more willing to put time and effort into learning.

Nonverbal interpersonal interactions, such as a friendly handshake or a thumbs-up, can help make greetings feel authentic and [build trust](#)—as long as students feel comfortable with physical contact.

When greeting students at your door:

- Say the student’s name
- Make eye contact
- Use a friendly nonverbal greeting, such as a handshake, high five, or thumbs-up
- Give a few words of encouragement
- Ask how their day is going

## **ADDRESSING UNDERLYING CAUSES OF MISBEHAVIOR**

Disruptive behavior is contagious—if one student misbehaves, it can quickly spread to other students. And while most teachers try to respond immediately, punishment often backfires. [Research](#) shows that trying to fix student misbehavior may be futile because doing so can spur resistance and more misbehavior instead of compliance.

“Despite overwhelming evidence that such strategies are ineffective, many teachers rely on reactive methods for classroom behavior management,” explain the study authors.

So instead of asking, “How can I fix misbehavior?” teachers could ask, “How can I create a classroom environment that discourages misbehavior in the first place?” In many cases, low-level disruptions and disengagement have less to do with the student and more to do with factors that the teacher can control, such as teaching style and use of stimulating activities. For example, [a study](#) found that when teachers encouraged students to participate in classroom activities rather than lecturing to them, students were more likely to stay on task.

Another [recent study](#) provides additional insights: When teachers focused their attention on students' positive conduct and avoided rushing to correct minor disruptions, students had better behavior, and their mental health and ability to concentrate also improved.

### **BENEFITS FOR TEACHERS, TOO**

A welcoming classroom environment doesn't benefit students alone—it can improve the teacher's mental health as well. Slightly more than half of teachers—[53 percent](#)—feel stressed by student disengagement or disruptions. The consequences can be serious: A [2014 study](#) found that “teachers report classroom management to be one of the greatest concerns in their teaching, often leading to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and early exit from the profession.”

All too often, teachers spend time and energy responding to misbehavior with corrective discipline, such as telling students to stop talking or giving them a time-out. These may work in the short term, but they can damage teacher-student relationships while doing little to prevent future misbehavior. Research shows that it can be beneficial for student and teacher well-being to instead focus on creating a positive classroom environment.

**The takeaway:** Starting class by greeting your students at the door helps set a positive tone for the rest of the day, promoting their sense of belonging, boosting their academic engagement, and reducing disruptive behavior.



<https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-set-up-your-classroom-for-the-first-day-of-school-2081586>

## **How to Set up Your Classroom for the First Day of School**

### **Set Up Your Elementary School Classroom in 10 Easy Steps**

By [Beth Lewis](#)

With the start of each school year, teachers get a fresh chance to arrange their classrooms for a new group of students. Every choice you make sends a message to your students, their parents, and anyone who visits your classroom. Through furniture, books, learning stations, and even desk placement, you communicate the values and priorities of your class. Follow these steps to deliberately maximize the organization and efficiency of your classroom set-up.

#### **What You Need**

- Classroom furniture (desks, chairs, bookshelves, etc.)
- Textbooks and reading books for the class library
- Posterboard for sharing class rules and other key information
- An alphabet/handwriting poster for easy student reference
- Materials for decorating bulletin boards (butcher paper, die cut letters, etc.)
- School supplies (paper, pencils, dry erase markers, erasers, scissors, and more)
- Optional: Computers, class pets, plants, games

### **1. Decide How to Place Student Desks**

If you are going to emphasize [cooperative learning](#) on a daily basis, you'll probably want to move the student desks into clusters for easy discussion and collaboration. If you want to minimize distractions and chatting, consider separating each desk from the one next to it, leaving a little buffer space to discourage misbehavior. You could also place the desks in rows or semi-circles. [Whatever you choose](#), work with the room and materials you have, leaving plenty of aisle space for you and the students to move around with ease.

### **2. Strategically Place the Teacher's Desk**

Some teachers use their desks as a central command station, while others use it primarily as a paper pile repository and rarely sit down to work there. Depending on how your desk functions as part of your teaching style, choose a spot where your desk will meet your needs. If it's very messy, consider placing it in a less conspicuous spot.

### **3. Determine What Belongs up Front**

Since students spend most of their days facing the front of the classroom, be very deliberate about what you place on the walls up front. Perhaps you want to emphasize discipline by placing the [class rules](#) on a prominent bulletin board. Or maybe there's a daily learning activity that requires easy-to-view space that all students can see. Make this prime time space engaging, but not distracting. After all, all eyes should be on you, not necessarily a colorful explosion of words and images that distract from the core instruction at hand.

### **4. Organize Your Class Library**

Just like a public library, your classroom book collection should be [organized](#) in a logical manner that will be easy for the students to maintain throughout the school year. This could mean sorting the books by genre, reading level, alphabetical order, or other criteria. Labeled plastic bins work well for this. Also consider providing a little comfortable reading space for students to lounge with their books during silent reading time. This could mean some inviting bean bag chairs or a dedicated "reading rug."

### **5. Set Aside Space for Your Discipline Plan**

It's wise to post your class rules in a prominent spot for all to see each day of the school year. That way, there's no opportunity for argument, miscommunication, or ambiguity. If you have a sign-in book or flip chart for rule offenders, set up a station for this activity. Ideally it should be in an out-of-the-way spot where curious student eyes can't easily stare as a rule-breaking student signs in, flips the card, or otherwise does his or her penance.

### **6. Plan for Student Needs**

Make sure basic [school supplies](#) are strategically placed for easy student access. This may include various types of writing paper, sharpened pencils, markers, erasers, calculators, rulers, scissors, and glue. Organize these materials in one clearly-delineated part of the classroom.

### **7. Define the Role Technology Plays in Your Classroom**

Placement of your computer center communicates the role technology plays in your teaching. If you aim for a more traditional approach to instruction with technology as an

occasional compliment, the computers likely belong in the back of the room or a cozy corner. If you integrate technology into most of the lessons, you might want to mix the computers in throughout the room so they're easily accessible. This is a personal choice based on your beliefs about teaching in the 21st Century in combination with how available technology is on your campus.

### **8. Express Yourself Through Bulletin Boards**

Almost every elementary school classroom has [bulletin boards](#) on the walls, requiring themes, displays, and regular rotation. Consider designating one or two bulletin boards as seasonal, and thus focus on keeping those boards timely and relevant to current holidays, instructional units, or class activities. Make it easy on yourself by keeping the majority of the bulletin boards "evergreen" and constant throughout the school year.

### **9. Sprinkle in Some Fun Stuff**

Elementary school is primarily about learning, for sure. But it's also a time for fun personal touches that your students will remember for a lifetime. Think about having a class pet and make space for cages, food, and other required materials. If a pet's not your style, place a few houseplants around the room to add life and a touch of nature. Make a game center for educational activities that students can use when finished with their work. Pop a couple personal photos from home on your desk to express your interests and personality. A little bit of fun goes a long way.

### **10. Minimize Clutter and Maximize Functionality**

Before your new students (and their parents) enter the classroom on the first day of school, take a look around your classroom with fresh eyes. Are there any little piles that could be put into a cupboard to tidy up? Does each part of the room serve a clear, functional purpose? What messages are you sending with your classroom's [overall appearance](#) at first glance? Make tweaks as necessary.

### **Check out your colleagues' classrooms**

Visit the classrooms of other teachers on your campus for ideas and inspiration. Talk to them about why they made certain organizational decisions. Learn from their mistakes, and don't be shy about copying any brilliant ideas that will work with your teaching style and resources. Similarly, don't feel pressured to adopt any aspects that aren't a good fit for your personality or approach. As a gesture of gratitude, share a few of your own best tips with your colleagues. We all learn from each other in this profession.

### **Strike the right balance**

An elementary school classroom should be engaging, colorful, and expressive. However, don't go overboard and end up more towards the overstimulating end of the spectrum. Your classroom should project a sense of calm, organization, and positive energy, as well as a seriousness about learning. If you gaze around your room and feel overwhelmed by too much color or too many focal points, your students will feel scattered, too. Find a balance between chaotic and stark. Aim for cheery, but focused. Your students will feel the difference each day they walk into the room.

### **Don't be afraid to make changes at any time**

Once your school year gets underway, you may find that certain aspects of your classroom set-up aren't working quite the way you initially envisioned. No worries! Just eliminate any parts that now seem obsolete. Add in the new functionalities you now know you need. Briefly introduce the changes to your students, if necessary. Every so often, reevaluate with a practical, flexible attitude, and your classroom will be a vibrant, organized place for learning all year long.



<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/genia-connell/10-fun-back-school-activities-and-icebreakers/>

### **10 Fun Back-to-School Activities and Icebreakers By Genia Connell**

As an extremely shy student, the beginning of a school year filled me with angst. My heart raced before the first bell ever rang. I'd wonder if the teacher would be as nice, *or as mean*, as I'd heard. I worried whether I'd make any new friends, and I would literally hold my breath waiting to hear how the teacher would mangle my name. In a 1970s world filled with Annes and Kathys, it was tough being a shy kid named *Eugenia Hajduk* on the first day of school. Until the fourth grade.

Fourth grade was the absolute best start I'd ever had to elementary school. The teacher didn't take attendance by calling our names. She let **us** tell her and everyone else our names by playing *The Name Game*. I was able say my own name (pronounced *Geena High-duke*), and the weight of the world was lifted off of my shoulders. For the next week, we played *Get to Know You* games as she called them, every day. My shyness faded quickly that year just because of those daily, just-for-fun, games.

I tell you the story above because I truly believe our own childhood experiences help shape the teachers we become. I'm especially sensitive to those children who are shy, and I make sure I learn the nickname and pronunciation of each of my student's names before school begins. *And* I do get-to-know-you activities and icebreakers the first week of school. [Scholastic Teachables](#) has some dandies — from a [reader's theater play](#) that brings a new class together to [seating cards with sharable jokes](#) — that are ready to print and run with.

**[Who's in Our Room Word Search](#)**

Arrival on the very first day of school is different than any other day of the year. It

normally takes about 20 minutes for my whole class to assemble due to late buses, parents who needed just a few more photos, and students who accidentally found themselves in the wrong room. This is the perfect activity while we wait for everyone to arrive. When students come in, they find a seat where this word search and a newly sharpened pencil are waiting. My third graders always enjoy searching for their own name along with those of their new classmates. After 10 minutes or so, students naturally begin helping each other, opening those very first lines of communication. Try making a *Who's in Our Room?* puzzle at [Discovery Education's Puzzlemaker](http://DiscoveryEducation.com/Puzzlemaker).



### Who is in Room 12?

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



ANGELINA  
 BRENT  
 CARTER  
 CHRISTOPHER  
 DELANEY  
 DIPIKA  
 ETHAN  
 HAILEY  
 IMAD

IMANI  
 JACOB  
 JOSEPH  
 KEEGAN  
 KENDALL  
 KENNEDY  
 KUMARAN  
 LOUIE

MAREN  
 MARK  
 MICHAEL  
 MRIDULA  
 OLIVIA  
 RITIKA  
 ROHAN  
 SAMIE



## D-ICEBREAKERS

●

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

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● ●

If you were stranded on a desert island, what three things would you want to take with you?

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● ● ●

If you could eat only one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?

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● ● ● ●

If you won a million dollars, what is the first thing you would buy?

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● ● ● ● ●

If you could spend the day with one fictional character, who would it be?

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● ● ● ● ● ●

If you found a magic lantern and a genie gave you three wishes, what would you wish?

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### D-icebreakers

Divide students into groups of 4-6

September 2019

© Created by Genia Connell

students and give each group one die and a copy of the [D-icebreakers](#) printable. (To save paper, display the sheet on the interactive whiteboard.) Students take turns rolling the die and answering the question that matches their roll. My students like when we do this as a “speed round” with a [three-minute timer](#) running on our whiteboard.

### Skit-tell Us About Yourself

With students seated in a circle, I pass around a bag of Skittles, telling each student to pick two. Once everyone has their candies, I turn around the *Skit-tell us About Yourself* board.

Going around the circle, students share information about themselves based on the color candy they have selected. If you only have enough time to go around once, students can choose between their two colors. If someone has two of the same color, they can give two different answers to the same question or trade with a classmate. This activity can also be done with any other assorted colored candies.



### Autograph Scavenger Hunt

Pass out the [scavenger hunt sheet](#) and watch the students swing into action as they try

Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Autographs, Please!**  
When you find a classmate who has done an activity on your sheet, ask them to sign that box. You can only sign each person's sheet once. Can you fill them all???



I slept in a tent. 	I hiked a mile or more. 	I acted in or attended a play. 	I read a map. 	I went to a party. 
I slept over at a friend's house. 	I visited a different state or country. 	I celebrated my birthday. 	I went to a museum. 	I planted a garden. 
I wrote a story or poem. 	I swam in an outdoor pool. 	I ate a hot fudge sundae. 	I made a new friend. 	I went to an amusement park. 
I went to a movie. 	I read a great book. 	I stayed up really late. 	I ate at McDonald's. 	I learned something cool. 
I went on a picnic. 	I watched a parade. 	I went to a fair or carnival. 	I rode in a convertible. 	I visited the zoo. 

to find a different classmate for each box. This activity gets loud (in a good way!) as students go from one to another, but conversations get started that definitely break the ice!

### Beach Ball Introductions

Students sit in a circle and toss a ball to a classmate in the circle. Students share information about themselves using the sentence stems their left and right pointer fingers are closest to. To prepare the ball for this activity, I used a permanent marker to write the first part of the sentence on one half of the ball while the words I write on the opposite side call for further explanation. For example, the student's left hand might land on *This summer I \_\_\_\_\_*, while their right hand lands on the word *during*. They might answer, *This summer I went to visit my grandma during the month of July*. In another variation, I use a ball that has several different ideas for sharing information. On that ball, the student responds to whichever prompt their left pointer finger is touching.

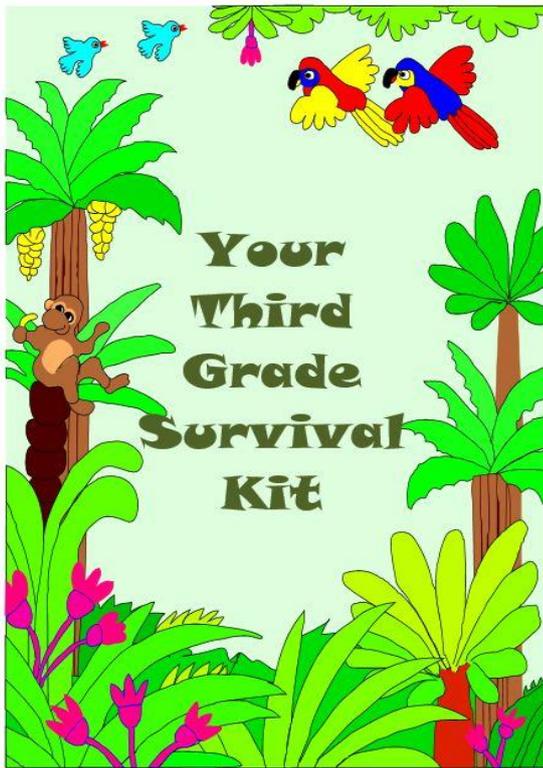


### Back to School "Survival" Bags

Each year I make treat bags for my students to give to them on the first day of school. This activity helps students understand that the classroom they have been assigned to for the next year is a warm and caring environment. I place the bags on desks before school, so as soon as my students walk in the room they see the bags tagged with their names and the words "[Your Third Grade Survival Kit](#)." Excitement builds throughout the day and they can hardly wait to find out what is inside. Shortly before going home, we take all of the items out of our bags one by one and discuss their meaning. The items I have chosen for the bag let the students know they are in an encouraging environment where we will all look out for each other and where effort is expected and rewarded.



*Click on the images above to print your own editable treat bag.*



## Welcome Adventurers!

Look through your survival pack carefully.  
Each item has special meaning to our classroom.

- ☛ The **cotton ball** is to remind you our room is full of kind words and soft fuzzy warm feelings.
- ☛ The **water bottle** reminds you of our never-ending thirst for learning in third grade.
- ☛ The **star** is to remind you how special you are, and I know you will shine!
- ☛ The **Hershey Hugs** are there for when you are feeling down--a hug always helps (and so does chocolate!)
- ☛ The **Lifesavers** are to remind you that you can always come to me for help. I'm just one of your many Lifesavers in our classroom!
- ☛ The **eraser** is to remind you that making mistakes is a part of learning. Never be afraid to make one!
- ☛ The **bandage** is to help you heal hurt feelings and to remind you not to cause them.
- ☛ The **tissue** is to help you dry a classmate's tears to make them feel better when they are down. (Also, so you don't pick your nose!)
- ☛ The **sticker** reminds you to stick up for classmates. We all stick together in this classroom!
- ☛ The **book mark** is a reminder of how much we will read, read, read this year.
- ☛ The **pencil** is because you have the "write" stuff to "survive" our school year adventure!

Welcome to my class! I am so happy you are here!  
Mrs. Connell

## Silent Line-Up

This is a good icebreaker at the start of class, or just when the kids need a break. I tell my students that I want them to line up by the day of their birth, in chronological order from January 1 to December 31. Then I tell them they can't talk while they do it! Students use a combination of sign language, charades, and all ten fingers (and sometimes toes!) to line themselves up in order. With third graders, this can sometimes take a while. Once they have achieved the task, I have them do it again but in opposite order, from December 31 to January 1. This time, however, they are allowed to talk to each other. The same task that allows talking is always finished more quickly. Afterwards, we discuss how a team task can be completed more quickly when people communicate with each other.

This activity can also be done with first or names in alphabetical order, height, shoe size, etc.

## Time Capsule

One school year is a pretty big percentage of an elementary student's life and a lot can change from September to June without your boys and girls even noticing. Creating a time capsule the first week of school is a great way to reflect on the changes when it gets revisited during the



last week of school. You can create one big time capsule or individual student time capsules that you store. Potato chip canisters work particularly well for individual time capsules. Here is what I plan to put inside this year:

- first day of school picture
- biography that includes current height, favorites, and three goals for the school year
- a letter each student writes to their future (end-of-the-school-year) self
- any trinkets students want to put in that represent themselves at the current point in time. This often includes pictures of best friends and boy bands, sport medals, little toys, etc.

### What Do We Have in Common? Card Towers

I found this activity last summer and it was a big hit on the second day of school! Students were broken randomly into groups of four. Each group was given a stack of index cards and a challenge: Build the tallest card tower in the class! The catch? Before you could add a card to the tower, you had to write something on it that every member of the team had in common. As more cards were added, the commonalities tended to stretch a bit (we've all had water to drink), but it was all in the name of teamwork.



### The Name Game

There are so many variations of this classic game! The version I play with my third graders involves everyone sitting in a circle and the first person to go says their first and last names, then something they like that starts with the same initial as their first name. The next student follows with their name and what they like, but then needs to repeat what the previous classmate(s) said. For example:

- First Student: I am Kaitlin Smyth and I like kangaroos.
- Second Student: I am Sungat Patel and I like s'mores. She is Kaitlin Smyth and she likes kangaroos.

The game continues around the circle until one student cannot remember the previous classmates' declarations. The next student begins the cycle again until everyone has had a turn. This is also easily done with names and alliterative places, names and animals, etc. Older students might enjoy playing the rhyming name game using this [name game generator](#).

If you are looking for even more great ideas, check out the links below where my fellow bloggers have shared even more ways to get your school year off to a great start.

- "[Continue Class Team-Building All Year Long](#)" by Lindsey Petlak
- "[Building Teamwork and Bridges: A STEM Icebreaker](#)" by Alycia Zimmerman
- "[Icebreakers to Create a 'Cool' Class Environment](#)" by Rhonda Stewart
- "[Back to School: First Week Fun](#)" by Kriscia Cabral
- "[Fabulous First-Day Ideas](#)"

The purpose of icebreakers, of course, is exactly what my fourth grade teacher knew all those years ago: to help your students get to know each other, overcome anxieties, start friendships, and learn the importance of teamwork.



## **Top 10 Common Teaching Mistakes for Teachers to Avoid**

By **Beth Lewis**

People enter the teaching profession because they want to make a positive difference in society. Even teachers with the purest intentions can inadvertently complicate their mission if they're not careful.

However, new teachers (and even veterans sometimes!) will have to work hard to conscientiously [avoid common pitfalls](#) that can make the job even harder than it inherently is.

Do yourself a favor and avoid these common teaching traps. You'll thank me for it later!

### **Aiming to Be Buddies With Their Students**

Inexperienced teachers often fall into the trap of wanting their students to like them above all else. However, if you do this, you are damaging your ability to control the classroom, which in turn compromises the children's education.

This is the last thing you want to do, right? Instead, focus on earning your students' respect, admiration, and appreciation. Once you realize that your students will like you more when you are tough and fair with them, you'll be on the right track.

### **Being Too Easy On Discipline**

This mistake is a corollary to the last one. For various reasons, teachers often start out the year with a lax discipline plan or, even worse, no plan at all!

Have you ever heard the saying, "Don't let them see you smile until Christmas"? That may be extreme, but the sentiment is correct: start out tough because you can always relax your rules as time progresses if it is appropriate. But it is next to impossible to become more tough once you've shown your pliant side.

### **Not Setting Up Proper Organization From The Start**

Until you've completed a full year of teaching, you are unable to comprehend how much paper accumulates in an elementary school classroom. Even after the first week of school, you'll look around at the piles with astonishment! And all these papers must be dealt with... by YOU!

You can avoid some of these paper-induced headaches by setting up a sensible organization system from day one and, most importantly, using it every day! Labeled files, folders, and cubbies are your friend. Be disciplined and toss or sort all papers immediately. Remember, a tidy desk contributes to a focused mind.

### **Minimizing Parental Communication and Involvement**

At first, it can feel intimidating to deal with your students' parents. You might be tempted to "fly under the radar" with them, in order to avoid confrontations and questions. However with this approach, you are squandering a precious resource. The parents associated with your classroom can help make your job easier, by volunteering in your class or [supporting behavior](#) programs at home.

Communicate clearly with these parents from the start and you'll have a band of allies to make your entire school year flow more smoothly.

### **Getting Involved In Campus Politics**

This pitfall is an equal opportunity offender for both new and veteran teachers. Like all workplaces, the elementary school campus can be rife with squabbles, grudges, backstabbing, and vendettas.

It's a slippery slope if you agree to listen to gossip because, before you know it, you'll be taking sides and immersing yourself in between warring factions. The political fallout can be brutal.

Better to just keep your interactions friendly and neutral, while focusing intently on the work with your students. Avoid politics at all costs and your teaching career will thrive!

### **Remaining Isolated from the School Community**

As an addendum to the previous warning, you'll want to avoid campus politics, but not at the expense of being insulated and alone in the world of your classroom.

Attend social events, eat lunch in the staff room, say hello in the halls, help colleagues when you can, and [reach out to the teachers](#) around you.

You never know when you will need the support of your [teaching team](#), and if you've been a hermit for months, it's going to be more challenging for you to get what you need at that point.

### **Working Too Hard and Burning Out**

It's understandable why teaching has the highest turnover rate of any profession. Most people can't hack it for long.

And if you keep burning the candles at both ends, the next teacher to quit might be you! Work smart, be effective, take care of your responsibilities, but go home at a decent hour. Enjoy time with your family and set aside time to relax and rejuvenate.

And here's the most difficult advice to follow: don't let classroom problems affect your [emotional well-being](#) and your ability to enjoy life away from school.

Make a real effort to be happy. Your students need a joyful teacher each day!

### **Not Asking for Help**

Teachers can be a proud bunch. Our job requires superhuman skills, so we often strive to appear as superheroes who can handle any problem that comes our way.

But that simply can't be the case. Don't be afraid to appear vulnerable, admit mistakes, and ask your colleagues or administrators for assistance.

Look around your school and you will see centuries of teaching experience represented by your fellow teachers. More often than not, these professionals are generous with their time and advice.

Ask for help and you just might discover that you're not as alone as you thought you were.

### **Being Overly Optimistic and Too Easily Crushed**

This pitfall is one that new teachers should be especially careful to avoid. [New teachers](#) often join the profession because they are idealistic, optimistic, and ready to change the world! This is great because your students (and veteran teachers) need your fresh energy and innovative ideas. But don't venture into Pollyanna land. You'll only end up frustrated and disappointed. Recognize that there will be tough days where you want to throw in the towel. There will be times when your best efforts aren't enough.

Know that the tough times will pass, and they are a small price to pay for teaching's joys.

### **Being Too Hard On Yourself**

Teaching is hard enough without the additional challenge of mental anguish over slip-ups, mistakes, and imperfections.

Nobody's perfect. Even the most decorated and experienced teachers make poor decisions every so often.

[Forgive yourself](#) for the day's blemishes, erase the slate, and gather your mental strength for the next time it's needed.

Don't be your own worst enemy. Practice the same compassion that you show your students by turning that understanding on yourself.



<https://www.edutopia.org/article/developing-your-classroom-presence>

## **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

### **Developing Your Classroom Presence**

Simple strategies for developing the strong relationships with students that encourage them to take risks and increase their learning.

By **Sol Henik**

The quality of presence—a state of alert awareness, receptivity, and connectedness to the working of both the individuals and the group in the context of the learning environment—is unfortunately not often taught explicitly in teacher education programs.

Teachers know they have presence when they have a genuine connection with the students that breeds confidence and respect throughout the classroom, allowing for risk taking and increased learning opportunities. These teachers engage in authentic relationships with students, addressing their academic and emotional needs while being resourceful about anticipating unknowns.

It's possible to develop and refine one's command of presence by focusing on authenticity, relationships, and confidence.

## **FOSTERING A SENSE OF AUTHENTICITY**

Students want and need sincerity, honesty, and care for the subjects they are being taught. This multidimensional approach is not easy, but it is attainable. The path is a journey of critical reflection that can include peer coaching, caring colleagues, and a teacher's own self-reflective toolbox.

Authenticity involves the sincerity of caring about your students and wanting them to grow. It's the backward-planning process that integrates what you know and are interested in, what your students know, and what they really need to know.

As in any relationship, an honest approach to your class, to yourself, and to the subject matter is vital to the effectiveness of your instruction. Giving students honest responses like, "That's a very good question. I don't know the answer right now, but I'm going to write it down and get back to you tomorrow," or "Class, I apologize..." can encourage students to take healthy risks in discussions and can give them permission to be imperfect.

Enthusiasm, creative lessons, implementation of technology, use of audio and visual input, or guest speakers will definitely help build your presence in the classroom by making your lessons more engaging. Building your own growth mindset so that you continue to improve lessons is just as important. Ultimately, these things show how you value your subject matter, which your students will assess as they decide how authentic they think you are.

## **BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS**

Developing positive and optimistic relationships is a worthwhile goal to have when establishing presence. An effective educator communicates a genuine belief that all students are capable of growth and learning.

Relationship-building skills always begin with the critical skill of listening. We should actively listen by asking great questions, having the patience to listen, and showing genuine interest by either asking follow-up questions or validating students' responses in a positive manner.

To create this type of engagement and shared focus, you may want to start class with warm-up writing that intertwines issues of personal relevance to the students with the lesson of that particular day. You could start a high school government class on the First Amendment by asking, "What rights do you wish you had as a student that you currently don't have, and why?" This type of question shows that you have empathy with students' perspective on the world and with their struggles.

It's the authenticity of the relationship that permits students and a teacher to see each other and know that what is being shared is real.

## **PROJECTING CONFIDENCE**

We know that effective teachers teach with confidence—which is not to be confused with arrogance. The first step in teaching with confidence is to know why you teach—why you show up to meet the intellectual, emotional, and physical demands that are placed on teachers every day.

In observing teachers for nearly two decades, I've noticed that the most effective ones demonstrate their confidence through an active voice, body language, and preparedness.

When speaking actively and expressively, you'll also need to know when and how to keep your voice calm and steady. Learning and practicing variations of voice will help you command presence and achieve the attention you and your students deserve. You can practice pauses, voice variations, and tempo changes. If you have the time and resources, try signing up for a theater class. Or simply volunteer to read children's books to preschoolers or kindergartners—those little ones will let you know instantly if you can keep their attention with your delivery.

Entering a classroom slouched, looking to the floor, or scowling while you have your arms crossed will not inspire too many students. Instead, stand tall, walk the room while talking, make eye contact, and smile. A confident body will greatly improve your presence.

If you enter a basketball game knowing you've prepared by practicing your offensive and defensive plays, you'll compete with much more confidence. The same goes for teaching. Benjamin Franklin once said, "If you fail to prepare, you are preparing to fail." You teach with confidence when you're prepared.

Presence is crucial to maintaining classroom management and to effective delivery of instruction, and it's a skill we can develop with effort.



<http://exclusive.multibriefs.com/content/5-strategies-for-decreasing-stress-in-the-new-school-year/education>

## **5 strategies for decreasing stress in the new school year**

**By Kimberly Ragland**



Every teacher on the planet knows what I'm talking about when I say I had "the dream" last night. You know, the one where you show up to the first day of school dressed in shorts and a tank top. Your walls are completely blank, and you can't find any prepared lesson plans or materials.

You don't recognize any of the kids who are sitting in straight rows with their hands folded, staring blankly at you, and you have no roster to tell you who anybody is. Right when you scream one of those horrible dream screams that don't make any sound, your principal and superintendent walk in to do your 45-minute teacher evaluation.

Sound familiar? Why do we always have "the dream?"

It's because teacher preparation is key. We know that if we're not ready to go when school starts, it sets the tone for our students and possibly gets them started on a path that leads to less than their best because of their low expectations for our class and how well we will teach them.

So, do teachers acutely feel that pressure to perform? You bet we do. However, there are lots of strategies that can be implemented by teachers of every kind to help lessen the stress as we head into a new school year, and they're not as much work as you might think. Here are five:

### **Throw Out the Junk and Get Organized**

Teachers tend to be hoarders. That's because we often spend our own money on supplies and resources. Don't blame us if we get a little attached and won't let go of anything we might, maybe, possibly could need someday!

But let's get realistic. If you haven't used those math tutorial books or those animal research units in two to three years, are you going to randomly decide that they're worthy again?

This also applies to your electronic files. About 90% of my lesson tools are stored on my Google Drive. But those pile up quickly, especially when compounded with data spreadsheets, accommodation folders, notes and memos from the office, and all those student pics that you took during fun labs and activities.

Be OK with throwing things away! Devote one day before the year starts to visit your files and any stored “teacher stuff.” Leave the feels behind you and go in with a clean-it-out mindset.

Then, create folders with names and the school year so you are ready to put things in mindful places and know where to find them in the shortest period of time. You will feel much more prepared if you start the year with the exact materials that you need.

### **Get Better — In Little Bits**

Who doesn’t want to instantly be the best at what they do? Teachers are no exception. So, to start every year, you promise yourself that you will set up a new classroom management system, add an extra reflection piece on the end of every lesson, master additional technology to implement, and write a note of encouragement to everyone on your campus each month to improve morale. And, a million other things.

Stress and anxiety will come from too many self-improvement promises and too much on your plate. Keep in mind that you already have important commitments to your family and community as well.

Keep it simple. Take a moment to reflect on your performance last year and pick two things you would like to work on. It doesn’t seem like much but mastering two new skills will make a greater impact on your students and your abilities than initiating six new goals and petering out on all of them by November because you’re exhausted.

Besides, you know you don’t give yourself enough credit for all the ways your classroom is a wonderful and fun place to be. Chances are your students and parents already think the world of you.

### **Plan To Relax**

Every year, we start our school schedule with that twinge of excitement for fresh faces, events and activities — and teachers tend to give 110% of themselves to make sure all these things are the best that they can be. So by October, we’re already feeling it.

To avoid the instant burnout, take some time *before* your district’s in-service days to plan a few “relax and recharge” opportunities for that first semester. Whether you choose something simple once a week or something more involved or expensive once a month, make it work best for you according to your time and resources.

The point is to have them already decided, booked and on your calendar before school anxiety and demands convince you to shove them aside.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Find a podcast that makes you happy (i.e., food, culture, entertainment) that's NOT related to your job and listen with your feet up.
- Procure babysitting to give yourself a few hours of reading at the park, heading to an estate sale or going on a movie date.
- Lock down a spa treatment, outlet mall adventure or lunch meetup with friends who WON'T talk shop.
- Map out and make arrangements for a road trip or buy those concert or airline tickets now for a romantic weekend with someone special.

### **Give Up Summertime Only When Necessary**

Every teacher everywhere hears the huge boom from that giant, slow-motion calendar page slamming down like an iron door, announcing the first day of July. It's the awful "summer is half over" moment that pops the cork on our plugged-up teacher brain.

First, you peek at your school email. Then you glance at Pinterest for one cute lesson idea.

Before you know it, professional development starts, and you've already snuck into the classroom and worked for two solid weeks decorating your fairy-tale teacher kingdom.

Don't do it! Make a reasonable list of things you feel are necessary enough to give up your summer fun time to get them done.

Decide on only two or three available workdays, prioritize tasks and try to take a friend or family member who can help. After that time is up, get back to relaxing. Hit the pool again, crack that thriller novel back open, or go enjoy that fun painting class. Your best teacher self will be grateful you did.

### **Know Yourself**

Finally, to start this new school year, I challenge you to decrease your stress by knowing who you are. Make an actual list of how you light up your classroom and campus and then post it in your space or notebook.

Anxiety pops up by seeing what everyone else is up to and immediately thinking it's better than your own capabilities and skills. Block out those doubtful thoughts! Your plans *are* engaging and fun!

You will build relationships with kids who will adore you for the time that you put in to make them successful. It doesn't matter what everyone else does. It's not better, it's just *different!* That's what makes a great school a wonderful place to be!

Utilize these tips to create wellness in your thought process, and don't let that stress crush the beginning of your year. Get ready, take care of yourself and believe in what you do!



**Kimberly Ragland** is starting her 14th year in education. With a degree from Sam Houston State University, Kimberly strives to be an educational superhero who believes in providing a strong, stable and inclusive environment where children have a better chance of succeeding. In her time away from school, she enjoys quality time with her husband (a fellow creative educator) and helping her two super boys in their efforts to save the world.



<https://www.techlearning.com/news/new-ideas-to-welcome-students-back>

## **New Ideas to Welcome Students Back** **By Matthew X. Joseph EdD**

Going back to school is an exciting time, and it's essential teachers create a warm and welcoming culture until the day students walk out for summer break.

The calendar flips to August, and the countdown begins; the “first day” is nearly here. When the day arrives, it starts with a good breakfast and putting on that “first-day outfit.” This look, for most, has been planned for weeks. Mom and Dad take the “first-day picture” and soon the students will set foot in the classroom for the first day of a new year...then what? Your role as a teacher is to set the culture and tone of your classroom from minute one. It's essential to make students feel welcomed and relaxed. They spend the majority of their day in the classroom, and the more you can do to make it feel welcoming, the better. Going back to school is an exciting time, and it's essential teachers create a warm and welcoming culture until the day students walk out for summer break. But how? Here are a few low-tech, and no-tech, ideas I always like to recommend to staff on their first day:

### **Hopes and Dreams Padlet**

As the new year begins, students have new or restored hopes and dreams; for the year, for themselves, for what the future brings. *Padlet* ([padlet.com](http://padlet.com)) is a tool where a teacher can create a digital pinboard that can be shared with students and families. Teachers can create and then email the unique Padlet link and families a link it and they are on the page. Idea: Ask students what they “hope” for the year. The answers can give you a baseline for your planning and show students you value them as a part of the class. You could start the year displaying the “Board of HOPES” and have students share theirs to create a culture of togetherness. It may also inspire classmates to help each other reach their dreams.

### **Suggestion Padlet**

Again using *Padlet*, this time promote student voice in your planning. Idea: Ask students **WHAT THEY** want in the room. Even ask about the structure of centers or suggestions of

books they want to read. Students are walking into YOUR room, but asking them for input in designing the room will allow them to have a sense of belonging right from day one.

### **Share Your Story**

*Flipgrid* (flipgrid.com) is a wonderful tool for collaborative video posting. *Flipgrid* is a social learning platform that enables teachers to pose a question and have students respond in a video. The idea is to build a “web” of dialogue in the classroom. Students can even respond to a student's answer, using video, if you enable the feature as the teacher. Idea: You can have a welcome back grid introducing yourself, so students know you and your story before they enter your class. Part of your story could be: Why did you go into teaching? Where did you go to college? What are some of your favorite things? What DON'T you want to see in the classroom? Or just an inspirational message. Then ask your students to do the same with student conversation stories. You can start the year knowing your students, and they'll know you.

### **GIF-Me**

Anyone with a phone has either used, overused, or seen silly GIFs that make someone laugh or show their excitement. GIFs are so popular that many students might even have a GIF keyboard on their phone. There are many free GIF sites on the web: <http://picasion.com/> or <http://gickr.com/>. Idea: Pose a question to your students as they get ready to come back to school. It could be as straightforward as What is your back-to-school mood? Email the question to your students and/or students' families depending on age, and ask them to send a GIF as their answer. Day one could be going through the GIF collection from the students. This is a fun way to start the year and get an inside look, without prying, at how your students are feeling.

### **Classroom Set-up Day**

Taking the *Padlet* suggestion above one step further, you can send an invitation to students before the first day, inviting them to come in and help you set up the classroom. Let your students bring ideas or something from home, and build THEIR classroom. It never hurts to bring snacks and turn on some music. When you can take the time to plan and laugh together, you build a culture of collaborative learning.

### **“Drop-off Day”**

The first day of school for many students begins with a heavy backpack full of supplies and an aching back. Their excitement to arrive may be more about dropping off their bags rather than meeting their teacher and classmates. Idea: Have a “drop-off day” where students can come in, see the class, and drop off materials or supplies. Allowing students to do this before the first day, let's them meet you, learn how to find their classroom, find their locker, if appropriate, and not be overwhelmed by a backpack full of supplies on the first day.

All of the above are *suggestions* as to how teachers can make the students' first day of school exciting and collaborative. Try any or all if you find them suitable for your own hopes and dreams for the year. That said, a must on the first day is to welcome students at the door, by name, and with a smile. Students want to know their teacher(s) is/are glad to see them and know who they are. This positive tone will set the stage for a joyous classroom and a feeling

that it is THEIR learning space. Rob H. keeps it simple: “I shake every pupil’s hand, welcome them, repeating their name to the class, and share with them that I look forward to working with them, with a big smile.”

*cross posted at [techinnovation.live](http://techinnovation.live)*

*Dr. Matthew X. Joseph is currently the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment in Leicester Public Schools. He has been a school and district leader in many capacities in public education over his 25 years in the field. Experiences such as the Director of Digital Learning and Innovation, elementary school principal, classroom teacher, and district professional development specialist. His work and experience focus on supporting teaching and learning. Follow Dr. Joseph on twitter at @MatthewXJoseph or read his blog [techinnovation.live](http://techinnovation.live)*

**THE INGED CONFERENCE**  
**Our host: Atılım University, Ankara**  
**Dates: 14 – 16 November 2019**

**OUR NEW SIG**  
***The INGED Q-ELT SIG***



## REFLECTIONS ON “THE USE OF STORYTELLING IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM INSTRUCTION”

By  
by Birgit Strotmann, PhD

at the 53rd International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition, Liverpool  
2 – 5 April 2019

by Aydan Ersöz

Birgit Strotmann was the representative of TESOL-SPAIN at the IATEFL Conference. She held a session entitled “The Use of Storytelling in English-Medium Instruction”. She started her session with the definition of a “story” and “storytelling”. She used the definition by the ABC Education (2012), “A story is a narration of a connected series of events involving the listener in four main ways: by instructing, educating, emoting and entertaining”.



According to Ken Baskin (2005) “Storytelling is a biological imperative for human beings, the psychological mechanism by which they can capture the coherent perceptions of an unknowably complex world required for survival.” [Baskin, K. (2015). Complexity, stories and knowing. Emergence: Complexity & Organization, 7 (2), 32-40. ISSN: 15327000. Retrieved from <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=d063a152-dd01-40379de81d749091f669%40sessionmgr4009&bdata=>]

Regardless of the learners’ age, stories are invaluable tools to be used in the classroom. Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007, cited in McNett, 2016) claimed that a good story is one that makes an emotional connection. Learning is enhanced when students are emotionally engaged. Gottschalk (2012, cited in McNett, 2016) added that stories act as cognitive flight simulators that help us practice without consequence navigating human and social life. [McNett, G. (2016) Using stories to facilitate learning. College Teaching, 64(4), 184–193. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2016.1189389>]

In English-Medium Instruction (EMI) classrooms, teachers usually encounter mixed or inadequate language levels. Stories bring differentiation which can overcome this variety.

Students in EMI classrooms usually lack motivation. Stories can help personalize information, make it memorable and personal which can increase motivation. They can also provide a platform for collaboration. In general, stories educate, illustrate, enlighten, and inspire. They give relief from the routine and stimulate the mind. They are a great motivator for teachers as well as for students.

Listening to stories develops the child's listening and concentrating skills via:

1. visual clues (for example, pictures and illustrations),
2. their prior knowledge of how language works,
3. their general knowledge.

This allows them to understand the overall meaning of a story and to relate it to their personal experience.



The activities (originally designed by professor Dolores Rodríguez Melchor, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas) that she used in her classroom with her students were:

Write a 3-minute speech for each of these situations, adapting the fairytale to the new context you are being given.

- The 3 Little Pigs - Tell the story as if it were the transmission of a football match.
- Snow White - Snow White has just received an Oscar. Write her acceptance speech.
- The Ugly Duckling – The Ugly Duckling tells his story to his psychiatrist.
- Hansel and Gretel - Hansel and Gretel have to declare as eye-witnesses/defendants in court.
- Little Red Riding hood - Prepare a news report for the late evening news.

While doing the activity, students were expected to

1. Make stories seem real and credible.

2. Express inner and outer dialogues.
3. Use contrast.
4. Include sensory language.
5. Employ drama and intrigue.
6. Identify layers of meaning.
7. Convey key message.



She concluded that the storytelling method is more effective than the conventional method. It helps to enhance students' interest, motivation and achievement. It is more student-centered and creates a more conducive and fun learning environment.



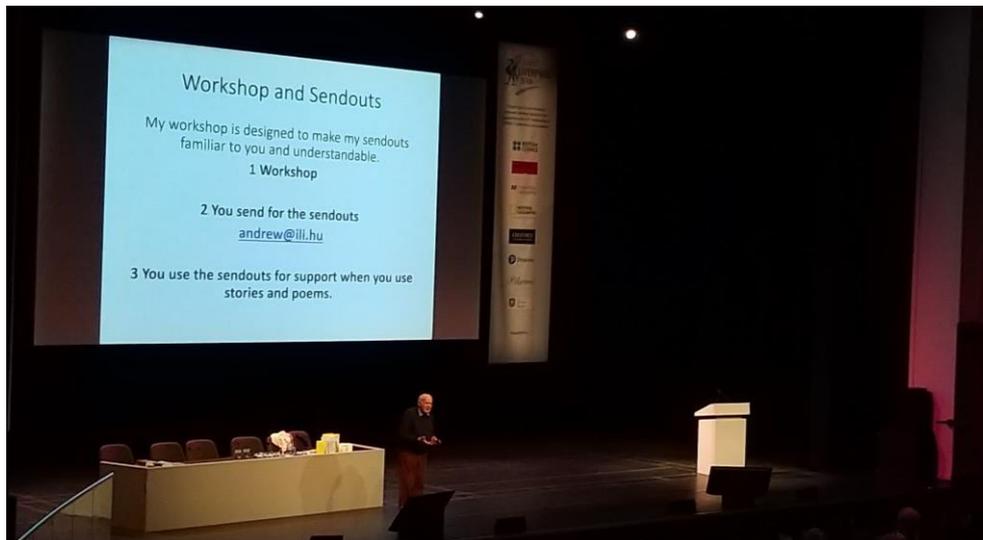
## REFLECTIONS ON “RESPONDING TO STORIES”

By  
Andrew Wright

at the 53rd International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition, Liverpool  
2 – 5 April 2019

by Aydan Ersöz

Andrew Wright held a session entitled “Responding to Stories”. He started his session by discussing why we should use stories in the ELT classroom. He stated that stories offer us paths through the infinite complexity of information coming through our five senses every moment of the day and night. And given this fundamental need for stories we then use them to extend our experience and to entertain ourselves but even more importantly to create a story map of values, perceptions and behaviours to guide us in our day to day living. Given stories are as fundamental to humans as water is to fish and given words often play a key role how can stories not be a central highway in language teaching?



He added that adults need stories as much as children. Beginners can be overjoyed to find they can understand a story in English and advanced students can stretch and deepen their feeling for English through stories.

### ***Should we tell stories or read stories aloud to the students?***

Both have their advantages:

#### **Telling**

- 1 You can use the language which the students know.
- 2 When we tell a story it is quite natural to repeat a phrase or a line.
- 3 You can mime and act out the parts. You can draw or show pictures.

4 The students feel it is your story and you are giving it to them.

### **Reading the story aloud**

- 1 You are confident with the language.
- 2 But written language is condensed, and it may be too much for them.
- 3 The students see and hear good ideas coming from books.

While choosing a story for your students, there are some questions you need to ask yourself:

- 1 Can enough of it be understood by the learners through its language and/or through supporting actions and pictures which you can provide fairly easily?
- 2 Is it likely to engage the learners?
- 3 Does it contain values which you feel are OK?
- 4 Is the story the right length OR can it be divided into sections of the right length (5 minutes)?
- 5 Will you feel comfortable telling it or reading it?
- 6 Does it offer a lot of possible 'springboard' activities?

### **Your preparation before the lesson**

#### **1 Understanding new important words.**

Decide on the language new to the students which they will need to understand in order to understand and enjoy the story. Not all the new words...just the key ones!

#### **2 Helping comprehension.**

Decide whether to teach new, key language before the story or during the story.

The students do NOT have to understand all the language...they must learn not to be put off if they don't understand a bit of the story!

#### **Some techniques for aiding understanding**

- 2.1 The flow of the story can make the meaning of some new words clear.
- 2.2 Try acting out the meaning as much as you can.
- 2.3 You might decide to tell the story in the mother tongue before you tell it in English.
- 2.4 You may give the new key words to the student to learn for homework before hearing the story.
- 2.5 I often write the new key words on the board and draw a picture to give them meaning. I leave them on the board during the story telling.
- 2.6 You may decide to find simple alternative words to the ones which are difficult to understand.
- 2.7 If you are fluent in both languages then you can use the mother tongue word and then re-tell that bit of the story using the new word in English.

#### **3 Story length.**

Decide if you want to tell or read the whole story at one go or to divide it into parts e.g. 5-minute episodes.

#### **4 Learn it.**

If you are going to tell the story...learn it.

## 5 Props

Prepare pictures, objects, clothes, make-up, sound recordings which might be helpful in creating interest, teaching meaning, adding depth, leading to springboard activities.



## 6 Rehearse it.

If you are going to read the story...practice reading it aloud.

## 7 Rehearse the whole presentation.

Practice telling or reading and showing pictures, miming, etc.

## 8 Story readiness.

Creating story readiness at the beginning is the single most important thing you can do for maximising engagement. Decide how you want to focus the students' minds on receiving the story. Decide on how to focus the students minds on the topic, ideas, feelings, etc of the story so that they get their 'meanings' ready: a) chatting (telling/questioning) about the topic b) showing the book cover and illustrations c) drawing on the board pictures from the story d) miming, etc. I have a story coat and a story bag; so they know a story is coming!

## 9 Prediction.

The above ideas are closely related to arousing their predictive skills. You might want to specifically activate their predictive skills...what might happen...what might be said...etc.

## Activities related to stories

You must decide if an activity is helpful to your students and whether to use it before, during or after the telling. Some of the activities are likely to be enjoyed but others below are dangerously mechanical...easy for you to organise and easy to kill off the students' enjoyment of the whole thing!

## **To check on their understanding of the story**

### **Some traditional ways of showing comprehension:**

- questions and answers, true/false statements, completing a gapped text, re-telling, sequencing texts or pictures

### **Less mechanistic ways of showing comprehension:**

- miming the actions of the protagonists, drawing a map and annotating it,
- writing the story down and illustrating it in a zig zag book, discussing the story, analysing the story, flowcharting the story, drawing a relationship diagram, drawing a picture or picture strip
- Jim Wingate demonstrated telling a story and manipulating students as he did so; the students were the protagonists...he helped them do and say things related to the story. It was engaging to see and the students seemed to enjoy it...and to do it they had to understand!
- A fun 'game' which is linguistically demanding is for the listeners to do their utmost to stop the teller continuing with the story by interrupting him or her by asking questions...about anything in the story...

*The old king sat by the window and cried.*

*How old was he?*

*Was the window open?*

*Etc.*

## **To encourage prediction and mind focussing**

Particularly useful at the beginning but also relevant during the telling:

- Through discussion of a subject in common between class and story eg Have you got a brother...this story is about a brother and a sister.
- Showing pictures or objects related to the story...and then telling the story
- Showing a book: cover, illustrations...evening reading out some key lines...and then telling the story.
- Write five key words on the board...discuss...then tell the story.
- Ask the students to illustrate new words and/or key moments in the story...and then tell the story showing the pictures.
- Give the class or pairs ten texts and ask them to sequence them correctly and then tell the story.

## **To analyse**

- Condense the story into five lines.
- For and against debate eg the case for the wolf.
- Draw a likes and dislikes diagram.
- Draw a storyboard for eg a video version of the story.
- Design a flowchart showing the sequencing of events in the story
- Analyse the story in terms of the craft of story writing: clarity, engagement, particularisation of person, place, object etc. main challenge and struggle, mini challenges and struggles, climax, resolution.

- Compare two different video recordings of the same story being told.
- Analyse and discuss the values, perceptions and behaviours of each protagonist. Discuss how these features reflect the place, time and culture.
- Each student writes an evaluation of the story and then passes it on to the next student who reads it, writes some comments and passes it on.
- Experiment with improving the story...maybe just the beginning.

### **To create**

#### **Learn to tell the story:**

- Being able to tell some of your own traditional stories is very enriching for others when you are travelling.
- Being able to tell stories engagingly is very enriching at all times!

#### **Re-telling the story with changes**

- Re-tell the story from one protagonist's point of view
- Re-tell set in your neighbourhood and time
- Re-tell with you and others in the story as protagonists
- Re-tell in a different historical or geographical location
- Re-tell but change the events and consequences
- Make the story into a shadow play/sound recording play/video play
- Make a zig zag book out of the story: writing and illustrating.
- Try re-writing the beginning of the story to make it more exciting/gripping. Exhibit all the examples completed and students are invited to vote for the most successful one.

#### **Responding to the story creatively**

- Add detail, not given in the telling, to a key moment. A particular version of this is for the students to close their eyes and imagine the scene you have just referred to. They then discuss in pairs and/ or in class eg what the forest is like which Little Red Riding Hood is walking through.
- Continue the story: write a sequel.
- Pairs draw pictures to illustrate the whole story to be displayed in a frieze.
- Write letters between the protagonists.
- What would you like to ask the protagonist/antagonist. (Writing, hot seating, drama)
- Write a poem or a song based on the story
- Write a dialogue of one object telling another object what happened.
- Find eg 5 famous paintings or photos which could be used to illustrate the story or give a background to it.
- Design and draw abstract pictures to illustrate the story...tell the story and explain how the shapes and colours chosen represent what is happening.

#### **Responding to the story through drama:**

- Divide the story into five parts and the class into five groups. Each group acts out one part of the story.
- What would you like to say to each protagonist?

- Hot seat a protagonist. One student sits at the front of the class and pretends to be a protagonist. The class buzz him or her with questions about the story and particularly his or her role in it.
- Each group dramatizes their favourite bit of the story.
- Pairs act out one part of the story. Student A is the protagonist speaking and Student B speaks the protagonist's inner thoughts.
  - Student A: *I will go and fight the monster.*
  - Student B: *I must be mad! I'm not going! I will pretend to go but hide!*
- The students can mime the whole story either standing up to do so or arranging objects on their desks and using their hands and fingers to represent protagonists.
- Whole class miming. When I have had the whole class mime out the story each student had a particular role ranging from being a tree or a door opening and closing through to the king and queen or a faithful dog...or indeed a monster.
- The students can make background noises while the story is being told...a whole class howling like wolves is unforgettable particularly if you are lucky enough to have a large class.
- Learn to re-tell the story, orally and dramatically. This is particularly good if you hand out quite a few very short stories eg Urban Legends and then everybody tours around the class telling other people the story they have learned.
- Continue the story...add an extra event in the story.

### **To express opinions and feelings**

- Pairs. Choose and talk about the key moments in the story. No right or wrong moments!

### **To use the story as part of 'project work'**

Example of a topic.

'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', becomes a butterfly. You might like to link this to an exploration of the idea of 'change'. The students might begin the project with the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' and then go on to explore other examples of change, for example, animals and people growing up. This would link very naturally with, 'can' and 'can't'. Activities might include: researching aspects of the content of the story eg geographical, historical, cultural, mathematical, food, clothes, animals, etc.

### **To give traditional practice and testing**

- Note, traditionally these exercises would be written by the teacher but Mario Rinvoluceri suggested they could all be written by students and used by other students, corrected by the teacher and given back to different students.
- Pairs write the story in 10 sentences on strips of paper and ask other pairs to put them in the right order
- Pairs write 10 questions about the story for other pairs to answer.
- Pairs write 'Gapped texts' and 'Jumbled texts'.



## REFLECTIONS ON THE INGED AFTERNOON IN ANKARA

13 April 2019

By  
Prof. Dr. Aydan Ersöz

After the opening ceremony of our new office in Ankara, we had an INGED afternoon. Prof. Dr. Paul Kei Matsuda from Arizona State University, USA held a session entitled “Workshop on Grammar Feedback and Assessment: Shifting the Debate”. He basically asserted that corrective feedback on grammar issues has long been part of second language writing instruction, but some researchers have cast doubt on its efficacy. In 1996, John Truscott synthesized research on corrective feedback and argued that grammar feedback is not only ineffective but harmful, and that teachers should stop providing corrective feedback. Following this controversial argument, researchers have debated whether, how and to what extent corrective feedback should be provided. One factor that has been left out of this debate is the



role of assessment in facilitating or hindering language development. In this presentation, he argued that what is more harmful than corrective feedback is the assessment practice that punish students prematurely. He then argued against punitive grading practice and suggested ways to foster language development.

Following that, on behalf of INGED, I held a workshop entitled “Over to You: Giving Feedback on Papers”. We started the session with discussing the differences between



evaluation and assessment. Evaluation focuses on making a judgment, so it is judgmental. Assessment, on the other hand, is defined as a process of appraising something or someone, so it is diagnostic. Assessment is made to identify the level of performance of an individual, whereas evaluation is performed to determine the degree to which goals are attained. Evaluation determines the extent to which objectives are achieved. It is summative and product-oriented. Assessment provides feedback on performance and areas of improvement. It is formative and process-oriented.

Feedback is really a piece of information or observation we are sharing. It is supposed to be reflective and objective. Often, feedback comes from judgment, however, we don't want to pass it off as feedback. An important dimension of feedback is its immediacy. The longer the time gap between the completion of the work and its feedback, the less effective the feedback becomes.

While giving students feedback, we should:

- Provide feedback in timely & time-efficient manner
- Be selective
- Be appropriate to level
- Be personal
- Be encouraging (not judgmental)

And we should remember:

- Addressing both content and grammar in feedback won't overwhelm students!
- Feedback without follow up is far less effective.
- Delayed feedback is worthless.

Then participants were given an anonymous writing work by a student. They were asked to do the following activity either individually or in pairs.

*When reading this paper and giving feedback, mention*

- *one thing you liked about this work, (I like ...)*
- *one thing you wished that person had done differently, and (I wish ...)*
- *one thing you wondered about. (I wonder ...)*

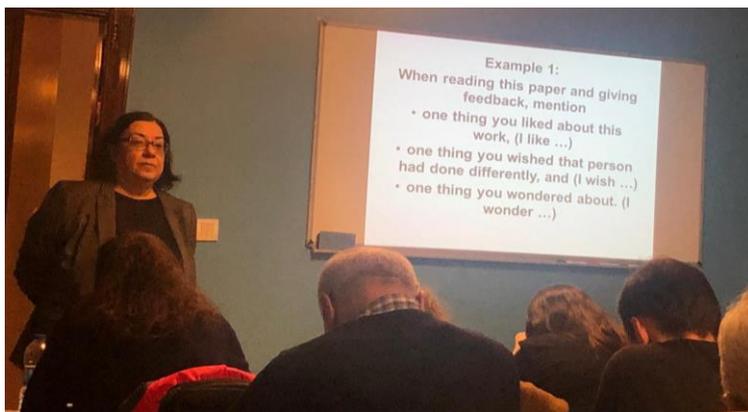
Next participants were given another anonymous writing work by a student. They were asked to do the following activity either individually or in pairs.

*When reading this paper and giving feedback, address only grammar mistakes (mistakes related to form NOT content).*

Finally, another anonymous writing work was given to the participants. Again, they were asked to do the following activity either individually or in pairs.

*When reading this paper and giving feedback, address both content and grammar (form).*

At the end of the workshop, all participants reflected on their experience and claimed that



giving feedback without attending to the grammar mistakes was really very difficult. Giving feedback is a skill. And like all skills, it requires learning, practice and patience. We all need to unlearn previously held beliefs and attitudes in order to go forward. As Mary McCarthy stated “A good deal of education consists of

unlearning – the breaking of bad habits.” Otherwise we will get stuck with correcting grammar mistakes which has no benefit for the giver or the receiver.





## REFLECTIONS ON THE INGED PROJECT “BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ VOICES”

4 – 5 May 2019

By  
Prof. Dr. Aydan Ersöz

The primary goal of the Project funded by the American Embassy was to equip prospective

**INGED ELT PROJECT II**



**“Bridging the Gap between Theory and  
Practice:  
Pre-Service Teachers’ Voices”**

May 04-05, 2019



**Venue:** City Hotel, Ankara

**Project Goal:** The INGED ELT Project II, funded by US Embassy, primarily aims to equip prospective teachers with critical thinking and teaching skills to assist them in overcoming challenges they face during their practice teaching.

**Project Description:** Nominated prospective (senior) ELT students from diverse universities will be provided with a two-day intensive English Language teaching program. The participants will have the opportunity to analyze the critical incidents they encounter during their practicum and to come up with solutions together, which will enable them to understand the realities of working conditions and classroom contexts.

**Attending Universities:**

Kocaeli University	Akdeniz University
Karadeniz Technical University	Pamukkale University
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University	İnönü University
	Anadolu University

**INGED ELT PROJECT II**

**Program – Day 1 (May 04)**

**Part I -for nominated prospective teachers-**

09.00 – 10.30 Dr. A. Suzan ÖNİZ, INGED

**“Effective Instruction Giving and Checking”**

10.30 – 10.45 *Coffee Break*

10.45 – 12.15 Prof. Dr. Aydan ERSÖZ, INGED

**“Classroom Interaction: L1 in the Classroom”**

12.15 – 13.15 *Lunch*

**Part II -for nominated prospective teachers-**

13.15 – 14.45 Esen METİN, INGED

**“Enhancing Engagement through Motivation”**

14.45 – 15.00 *Coffee Break*

15.00 – 16.30 Akın GÜNGÖR, INGED

**“Reading and Listening (for Input)”**

**Program – Day 2 (May 05)**

**Part I -for nominated prospective teachers-**

09.00 – 12.00 *Excursion*

12.00 – 13.00 *Lunch*

**Part II -for registered ELT students\*-**

13.00 – 13.45 Heidi SALESKA, (English Language Fellow, US Department of State)

**“Motivation and Cultural Responsive Teaching”**

13.45 – 15.15 Dr. Büşra ÇELEN, INGED

**“The Elephant in the Room: Productive Skills”**

15.15 – 15.30 *Coffee Break*

15.30 – 17.00 Dr. Nazlı GÜNGÖR, INGED

**“Classroom Practices in Language Assessment”**

17.00 – 17.30 *Closing*

\* Second part of the Program on May 5th (between 13.00-17.30) is open to all ELT students. To register for the program please send your information (name, school, contact information) to [ingedeltproject@gmail.com](mailto:ingedeltproject@gmail.com) between April 29-May 1. The number of the participants is limited to 28.

teachers with critical thinking and teaching skills to assist them in overcoming challenges they face during their practice teaching. The target group of the project was the senior ELT students from universities in diverse regions of Turkey. The participants were given the

opportunity to analyze the critical incidents they encountered during their practicum and to come up with solutions together, which enabled them to understand the realities of working conditions and classroom contexts. Throughout the program, the students also had the chance to experience teamwork and build professional socialization, which they would, hopefully, sustain after the program.

The goal of the project was to provide two student teachers from seven different universities with an intensive two-day training program that primarily focused on identifying, analyzing, and overcoming challenges in teaching English. As teaching profession requires building and maintaining strong connections among teachers, the project also aimed to help these student teachers to build positive relationships with each other via teamwork practices.

To this end, the academic head of the ELT departments from universities were contacted by the project coordinators. These universities were selected based on several criteria such as the cultural variety, geographical diversity, and limited professional development opportunities. The students were selected on the principles of merit and the selection criteria were the ability to complete the program, high academic achievement, and genuine interest in learning from each other as well as exploring the field of ELT further. After the selection process, the coordinators collected data on the challenges and critical incidents these students encountered during their teaching practicum to determine and specify the content of the program.

The participants were hosted in Ankara for two full days to attend the program. Throughout the program, six “input plus practical” workshop sessions - in which students had the opportunity to gain theoretical and practical knowledge on the challenges they had identified, and brainstormed solutions to overcome them together. Also, topics like how the cultural diversity affects the practicum, what the student populations are in these areas, and how the school dynamics are related to sociocultural realities were discussed. As a means of building the solidarity INGED basically aims for in its mission and vision statement, a cultural excursion to Anıtkabir to build rapport and strong connections among the group was held as well.

The first day of the program was open to only invited student teachers, whereas the second day was free for other student teachers and practicum supervisors so that they could learn from each other. Therefore, the invited participants and others had the chance to exchange the problems they encountered in the practicum, discuss the classroom realities, and produce as many solutions as possible in group work activities.

In each 90-minute workshop session, there was a 20-minute input stage where the presenters introduced the theoretical background of the problem. In the following 40-minute practice stage, the presenters encouraged the participants to analyze the problem and observed them while they were producing solutions in teams. In the last 30-minute presentation stage, the teams presented their solutions. By the help of this interactive exchange, the participants were able to broaden and deepen their understanding regarding teaching and learn from and with one another.

You can find some photos taken during our visit to Anıtkabir.







## REFLECTIONS ON THE INGED PROJECT “BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ VOICES”

4 May 2019

By  
Prof. Dr. Aydan Ersöz

As a part of the INGED Project “Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice: Pre-Service Teachers’ Voices”, I held a workshop entitled “The Use of L1 in the Classroom”. It was an interactive session where participants were expected to work in small groups to discuss certain questions for a while and then share their answers with the whole group for further discussion



The first question was “What is language?” We came to the conclusion that the basic definition of language is it is a means of communication. The second question was “How do we communicate with babies, toddlers, or young children?” We concluded that we do NOT resort to translation when children fail to understand us in their mother tongue. We use body language, gestures, hand movements, etc. to clarify the message. We use simple language and paraphrasing. We employ exaggerated exclamations and noises to express ourselves. The third question was “What are the responsibilities of a language teacher?” We decided that teachers are supposed to be good role models and leaders who inspire their

students. The next question was “When and why do language teachers switch to Turkish?” These were the answers we gathered:

- To explain a complicated aspect of language. (We want our students to understand us more easily.)
- To give the instructions of an activity. (We want our students to understand us faster.)
- To give the meaning of a vocabulary item. (We want to save our time and effort.)
- To manage a classroom discipline issue. (Scolding and praising in L1 are more effective.)

We also concluded that when we do this, we fail to fulfil our responsibilities. The impressions we create are:

- Turkish is a language. We use it for communication. English is NOT a language. It’s only a school subject matter that we learn about. English does NOT have a real communicative value.
- The teacher will explain everything in Turkish so I do NOT need to try to understand what s/he says in English. There is no challenge left for me.
- Translation is a natural language skill, and there is a one-to-one correspondence between Turkish and English.
- I can’t speak English. Even the teacher doesn’t speak English. How can I?

Finally, we discussed “How can we maximize the use of the target language in the classroom?” The suggestions we came up with are listed below:

### **DO**

- Speak in short sentences, and discrete phrases. Pronounce correctly, clearly and slowly, looking directly at the class.
- Use consistent and redundant (repeatedly received from a variety of sources) language.
- Act out meanings, or use props, objects, pictures, or gestures to make meanings clear. Pause after each sentence or phrase to associate it with a set of sounds.
- Use activities and tasks that can help learners explore. Involve them actively in the learning process.
- Repeat cheerfully and patiently and continue to associate clues to meaning with your words as long as needed.
- Use learning/ teaching materials that will bring your students’ natural motivation and curiosity to learning.
- Accept the fact that students will use their mother tongue when speaking to each other, except during language practice activities. Moreover, they will use their mother tongue to speak to you until they are ready to use English. Understand what they are saying in Turkish and respond in English. But you should continuously encourage them to communicate in English.

- Teach English integratedly and inductively. Help your students induce the use and usage from exposure to the language in use which involves the discovery technique.
- Keep in mind that people learn a language best when they use it to do things rather than through studying how language works and practicing rules.
- Be aware of the fact that languages are rich. Sometimes different usages occur because of this richness.
- Remember that learning always leads students to success in exams. If they learn, they can handle any exam.
- Believe that students can and will meet and often exceed your expectations.



### DON'T

- Confuse students with incomprehensible language.
- Change the phrases and sentences you use often.
- Rely on only the spoken word. Students need more visual and tactile stimulation and often need to be physically active.
- Use traditional methods and techniques. Speeches, lectures, explanations and directions without clues to meaning are boring and not useful.
- Expect students to grasp new material the first time through. Remember language learning is a long and slow journey.
- Focus on testing or grading. Over-control them by bringing lots of restrictions to the class.
- Pretend that you can't speak or understand the mother tongue (as a Turk).

- Turn to grammar thinking that it can create a miracle. Unfortunately, grammar explanations do not accelerate learning or make the impossible happen.
- Try to explain «grammar». Grammar is far too complicated, intriguing, complex, and mysterious to be adequately explained by brief definitions.
- Compare and contrast grammar points and come up with artificial explanations. These confuse learners and cause despair.
- Encourage them to be exam-oriented.
- Underestimate their cognitive abilities.





## REFLECTIONS ON THE INGED EVENT IN ANKARA

15 June 2019

By  
Prof. Dr. Aydan Ersöz

On June 15, 2019 we had an INGED event in City Hotel, Ankara. The event was certificated and free. On behalf of INGED, I and Nazlı Güngör held sessions. We had two guest speakers: Dr. Sedat Akayoğlu from Abant Izzet Baysal University and Dr. Nuray Grove from TED University. We had about 50 participants mostly from the ELT Departments of various universities.

**INGED ELT EVENT**

June 15, 2019  
City Hotel, Turan Güneş Bulvarı  
Cankaya/Ankara



**10.00-11.00 Storytelling and Dramatization for Young Learners**  
Prof. Dr. Aydan ERSÖZ (INGED President)

**11.00-11.15 Coffee / Tea Break**

**11.15-12.15 Preparing Assessment Tasks in EFL Contexts**  
Dr. M. Nazli GÜNGÖR (INGED)

**12.15-13.15 Lunch**

**13.15-14.15 ICT Integration for Enhancing Collaborative Learning:  
Not Only for Learners but also for Teachers**  
Dr. Sedat AKAYOGLU (Abant Izzet Baysal University)

**14.15-14.30 Coffee / Tea Break**

**14.30-15.30 Pygmalion Effect in the EFL Classroom: The  
Importance of Grit**  
Dr. Nuray Grove (TED University)

\*For registration, please send your name, institution, and affiliation to [ingedturkiye@gmail.com](mailto:ingedturkiye@gmail.com) by June 13, 2019.

\*\*The event is certificated and free.

Dr. Sedat Akayoğlu basically stated that digital technologies offer new opportunities for learning in our modern society, in which learning to work with others and collaborate has become an extremely important skill. Collaborative learning (CL) is an umbrella term used for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual efforts by students or students and teachers together. Usually students are made to work in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions or meanings or creating a product. According to Dillenbourg (1999) CL is defined as “a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together”. [Dillenbourg, P.(1999). What do you mean by” collaborative learning”? In P. Dillenbourg (Ed), Collaborative-learning: Cognitive and Computational Approaches (pp1-15). Oxford: Elsevier] It can be seen as social interactions that are targeted towards deeper knowing. CL refers to an instruction method in which students are responsible for one another’s learning as well as their own. Thus, the success of one student helps other students to be successful.

The use of ICT in CL will make it easy for people to collaborate easily with someone far away as they would with someone in the same room. E-collaboration technologies allow people to bring diverse skills on collective ventures that eliminate the barriers of time, distance and resources (Bessagnet, Schlenker, & Aiken, 2005). [Bessagnet, M.N., Schlenker, L. & Aiken (2005). Using e-collaboration to improve management education: three scenarios. Journal of Information Systems & Technology Management, 2(1), 81-94.] ICT is not designed to replace face-to-face interaction; it is designed to supplement it by allowing people to communicate anytime and anywhere. ICT as a collaborative technology offers functionalities for co-ordination of group work, tools for recording progress and giving feedback, libraries of solutions and best practices as well as meta-information (that is date, author and sequence of contributions).



As Becta (2008) has suggested, some benefits of using ICT to support CL can be listed as [Becta (2008) Web 2.0 Technologies for learning @ stages 3 and 4: Summary Report Retrieved from <http://www.educationau.edu.au/SICTAS> cti on 13/08/2013.]:

- Students' engagement and participation is increased, particularly for quieter students who can work collaboratively online without anxiety of raising questions in front of the class. Students can also express themselves through less traditional avenues such as video.
- Social networking can encourage online discussion amongst students outside school hours.
- Tolls can be available anytime and anywhere, which may encourage some students to extend their learning through further investigation into topics that interest them.
- Students feel a sense of ownership and engagement when they publish their work online and this can encourage attention to detail and improved quality of work overall. Some teachers use the publication of work to encourage peer assessment.

Dr. Sedat Akayoğlu also gave several examples from various software and technology tools. Dr. Nuray Grove's session was about the Pygmalion effect in the EFL classroom. The Pygmalion effect was first established in 1965 by a Harvard psychologist named Robert Rosenthal. The Pygmalion Effect, also known as the Rosenthal effect, states that when a teacher/supervisor has **high expectations** of someone, that seems to **increase** the person's performance. That has been proven true even when the person with the expectations tries their best to hide it.

The theoretical counterpart to the Pygmalion Effect is the Golem Effect, in which low expectations lead to a decrease in performance. In other words, "When we expect certain behaviors of others, we are likely to act in ways that make the expected behavior more likely to occur." When as a teacher we believe that a student is less qualified, our efforts in teaching that specific student diminish.



“Grit” is our passion and perseverance towards reaching a long-term goal. According to Angela Duckworth, it is the tendency to sustain interest and effort towards long term goals. The research shows that a teacher’s expectations influence the success or failure of student to a great extent, and it enhances students’ “grit”.

Great teachers truly believe in their students’ improvement of the intellect and abilities and they never stop learning. To put it in other words, they continually encourage students to adopt a growth mindset, while doing the same thing for themselves. They set high standards for all their students and show them how to reach those standards, while creating a nurturing atmosphere in the classroom.

**YES ENGLISH CAN BE WEIRD.  
IT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD  
THROUGH TOUGH THOROUGH THOUGHT, THOUGH!**

## REFLECTIONS ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup> ELTER COLLOQUIUM

22 June 2019

By

Asst. Prof. Dr. Sedat Akayođlu

ELTER is an organization primarily for those involved in English Language Teacher Education Research in Turkey. This research group was founded in 2011, and the researchers have been meeting annually at different institutions and in different cities. The main purpose of this group is to bring together researchers and would-be researchers in the field of English language teacher education with the aim of contributing to the improvement of the overall quality of English language teacher education in Turkey, both pre-service and in-service, by encouraging effective teacher education practices and making recommendations to relevant stakeholders and policymakers. Different from the other academic events in Turkey, this group of researchers mainly focus on conducting research studies on English language teacher education, and the colloquiums hosted by the ELTER group provide a forum for English language teacher educators and researchers (in Turkey and beyond) to discuss and share their practices, experiences and research. The committee members of this research group are Prof. Dr. Gölge Seferođlu (Middle East Technical University), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sumru Akcan (Bođaziçi University), Dr. Tom Godfrey (International Training Institute, Istanbul), Assist. Prof. Dr. John O'Dwyer (Bilkent University), and Assist. Prof. Dr. Sedat Akayođlu (Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University).

As for the format of this event, the day starts with a keynote speech on teacher education. Up to now, Simon Borg, Kay Livingston, Tom Farrell, Olcay Sert, and Gölge Seferođlu have been invited to give a plenary speech, and they shared their ideas on the current issues in the field of English language teacher education. After the keynote speech, the research groups who proposed their research studies in the previous meeting present their research studies. They present what they have completed and what they are planning to do for the following events. In these sessions, the other ELTER members make comments and share their suggestions for the research studies. In the afternoon sessions, new research groups are formed for the next year's event. New members may join the previous research groups, or the researchers who have completed their studies may create new groups. These new research groups present their proposals and the ELTER member leave for completing their research projects for the next year. As can be seen, the format of the colloquium is quite different from the other conferences, meetings, or seminars. As the output of these colloquiums, the researchers publish their research studies in academic journals. Since the ELTER members are working at different institutions, they could collect data from very different contexts, which is invaluable for us. Until now, the following research studies have been published:

Akayoglu, S., Satar, H., Dikilitas, K., Cirit, N., & Korkmazgil, S. (2020). Digital literacy practices of Turkish pre-service EFL teachers. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 0. doi:<https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.4711>

- Karaman, A. C., Özbilgin-Gezgin, A., Rakıcioğlu-Söylemez, A., Eröz-Tuğa, B., & Akcan, S. (2019). Professional learning in the ELT practicum: Co-constructing visions. *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 19(1), pp. 282-293.
- Rakıcioğlu-Söylemez, A., Ölcü-Dinçer, Z., Balıkçı, G., Taner, G. & Akayoglu, S. (2018). Professional learning with and from peers: Pre-service EFL teachers' reflections on collaborative lesson planning. *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 18(1), pp. 392-415.
- Akcan, S., Aydın, B., Karaman, A. C., Seferoğlu, G., Korkmazgil, S., Özbilgin-Gezgin, A., Selvi, A. F. (2017). Qualities and qualifications of EFL professionals: What do intensive English program administrators think? *TESOL Journal*, 8(3), pp. 675-699.

This year's ELTER Colloquium was held at Gazi University School of Foreign Languages, Ankara on 22nd June 2019. The event started at 09.00 a.m. in the morning and lasted until 5 p.m. In the morning session, the ELTER researchers had their presentations on their research studies, which were proposed in the previous year's event. The research topics were (a) Preparing Context-aware Pre-service Teachers, (b) Proposing a CALL syllabus for ELT programs in Turkey, and (c) The Use of VEO to Facilitate Teacher Learning in the Practicum. The presenters talked about the challenges they experienced in all stages of their research studies, the findings of their studies, and their plans for the next year's event.



In the afternoon session, some ELTER members created new research groups and the others decided to continue their previous research studies. New members could join the previous research projects if they are interested in the research topic. As a result, we left Gazi University School of Foreign Languages with great motivation to start our new research projects and with pleasure to meet new ELTER members. Next year, the 9<sup>th</sup> ELTER Colloquium will be hosted by Kayseri Erciyes University in June 2020.

If you would like to be a member of this research group, you are welcome to join us if you have the following qualifications:

- Being able to carry out research studies collaboratively
- Having an MA or Ph.D. degree in English Language Teaching
- Interested in and actively studying teacher education (in-service or pre-service teachers)
- Being willing to host an upcoming ELTER event.

For more information about the ELTER Community, you can visit the official website of ELTER (<http://www.elterturkey.com>), and follow Twitter account (<http://www.twitter.com/elterturkey>).



# SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

In this issue we would like to share with you an article in which a teacher shares her ideas on better student-teacher relationship building and other teachers' ideas about the best seating practices.

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-strategies-building-better-student-relationships>

## **6 Strategies for Building Better Student Relationships**

**By Cicely Woodard**

One day, Alyssa, an eighth-grade student, came to our middle school wearing a purple bandanna as a headband, even though she knew that our school's dress code does not allow bandannas. While it seemed like a simple issue to reconcile, I soon found another teacher knocking on my door that morning, asking me to tell Alyssa to take the bandanna off. He said he didn't feel comfortable handling the situation but knew I could persuade Alyssa to follow the rules because she trusted me.

That day, I took Alyssa aside, and we had a private conversation about why bandannas were not allowed at school. I assured her that I understood why she wanted to wear a headband, and I even offered her the option of wearing a different one. After our conversation, Alyssa calmly went to the bathroom and returned to class without the bandanna on her head.

This seemingly small encounter reminded me of the power of positive relationships in schools and why teachers must be intentional about building them. In the classroom, positive relationships are the foundation for learning success. Yet as teachers, we sometimes neglect to take the time to learn about our students as people, which can create barriers to learning and make even small interactions (or conflicts) challenging to handle.

Alyssa wasn't a perfect student, and math didn't come easy for her, but she worked hard in my class. She asked questions. She even came in before and after class for additional help or just to talk about her social life. She trusted me because I worked hard to build a relationship with her by showing that I respected her and cared for her well-being.

Many teachers feel pressure to cover content and to tackle many other job-related duties. However, I have found that investing time early and often to learn about students—by making small changes in our classroom—creates an environment where they are motivated to be successful. Here are six strategies I use to build better relationships with my students.

1. Learn names quickly and correctly. Too often, students, especially those who are marginalized, feel invisible in our schools. Value student diversity and identity by learning

names quickly and pronouncing them correctly. Only use nicknames if students prefer them; never create a nickname for a student, because this strips him or her of the identity that is embedded in a name. Every year on the first day of school, I have my students create name tents and pronounce their names correctly for me. I practice pronouncing their names often. I take up the name tents and pass them out each class period until I have learned all of the students' names. I greet each of my students at the door by name before class.

2. Students are never too old for show-and-tell. Help students feel they're more than just another student by allowing them to bring in something that represents them, their culture, or some activity that they enjoy doing at the beginning of the year. Plan five to 10 minutes each day for a few students to share what they brought until you have given everyone in the class the opportunity. In my classes, students have brought in baby pictures of themselves, goggles that they use for their competitive swim team, and souvenirs from a family vacation. Once, my student Hannah brought her ukulele and sang the class a song. She turned show-and-tell into a party, and my students loved every minute of it.

3. Post student pictures and student work. Elementary teachers are very good at sharing student work, but middle and high school teachers often neglect this important practice, feeling that it's unnecessary for older students. I've found older students still need to be reminded that you value their work. When my students participate in the show-and-tell, for example, I snap a picture of them. Those pictures are then printed and posted on a bulletin board in class that stays up all year long. The students love seeing how they have changed over the course of the year because they realize that their growth and development is not only physical, but intellectual and emotional as well. In addition, students are so proud when their exemplary work, such as individual math projects and group work on math tasks, is displayed and celebrated.

4. Assign seats, and change them often. We all know that middle school students don't always get along, but when students have opportunities to work together, they learn about each other and discover ways to work together even though they're different. I have my students sit at tables in my middle school math classroom. I assign them to tables of three or four students each; then they change seats once per week using an online random seat changer that is embedded in our attendance management system. After each change, the students answer a quick question, such as, "Who would you love to have dinner with and why?" to get to know the people at their table before spending a week collaborating with them on mathematical tasks.

5. Find small ways to connect. In my first-period class, we often have circle time on Monday mornings or after a break. We stand in a circle and pass a ball around. The person with the ball shares a compliment about another person in the circle, what they did over the weekend or the break, or how they are feeling in the moment and why. Once a student participated in goat yoga for a friend's birthday over the weekend. We were all intrigued by her pictures of goats walking on their backs during yoga class! If I forget circle time on Mondays, my students always remind me. They also always insist that I share too. Though it can seem like every minute is needed to get through the academic content, I've learned that a five-minute

investment once a week to learn about each other is invaluable to my students and builds a better culture in my classroom.

6. Simply listen. As teachers, we often feel like we need to keep a professional distance from our students, but I've found that taking time to make small talk can help break down barriers to learning. Because I've made myself approachable, some of my students will tell me stories about their lives during the five minutes between classes. I stop what I am doing, look them in the eyes, and listen. I love seeing their eyes light up as they tell me these stories, and these encounters always leave me a little more knowledgeable about who they are as people.

All students deserve to have adults in their schools who care about them enough to be intentional about building positive relationships that give them the space to make mistakes and learn. If we truly expect our students to learn with us, they need to know that we care about them. They also need opportunities to learn about each other, so that they can build a community in which they grow together as learners.

[http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom\\_qa\\_with\\_larry\\_ferlazzo/2019/02/response\\_the\\_best\\_classroom\\_seating\\_puts\\_students\\_in\\_charge\\_of\\_their\\_space.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazzo/2019/02/response_the_best_classroom_seating_puts_students_in_charge_of_their_space.html)

The screenshot shows the Education Week Teacher website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'EDUCATION WEEK TEACHER' on the left, 'LOGIN | REGISTER | SUBSCRIBE' in the center, and a 'Get 2-Week FREE Trial >>' button on the right. Below the navigation bar is a menu with 'TOPICS', 'SPECIAL REPORTS', 'BLOGS', 'EVENTS', 'OPINION', and 'CAREERS'. A large blue banner for 'FIND TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION JOBS' is prominent, with a 'Find jobs.' button and a list of benefits: '- Sign up for job alerts', '- Join online job fairs', and '- Get career advice'. To the right of the banner is a 'Subscribe Now.' button. Below the banner, there is a section for 'Teacher blogs > Classroom Q&A With Larry Ferlazzo' and a 'See our Teacher News Coverage' link. The main content area features a header for 'OPINION Classroom Q & A With Larry Ferlazzo'. To the right of the header is a bio for Larry Ferlazzo: 'An award-winning English and Social Studies teacher at Luther Burbank High School in Sacramento, Calif., Larry Ferlazzo is the author of *Helping Students Motivate Themselves: Practical Answers To Classroom Challenges*, *The ESL/ELL Teacher's Survival Guide*, and *Building Parent Engagement In Schools*. He also maintains the popular 'Websites of the Day' blog. In this EdWeek blog, an experiment in knowledge-gathering, he will address readers' questions on classroom management, ELL instruction, lesson planning, and other issues facing teachers. Send your questions to [lferlazzo@epe.org](mailto:lferlazzo@epe.org). And offer your own thoughts and responses in the comments section.'

## What are the best classroom seating arrangements?

Figuring out seating arrangements is one of the most important decisions we teachers have to make—not only about which student sits where but also to help create the kind of learning environment we want for our students.

This series will explore different ideas for this important aspect of our teaching.

Today, Jennifer Orr, Madeline Whitaker Good, Rich Czyz, Tan Huynh, and Mark J. Westfahl contribute their ideas. You can listen to a [10-minute conversation](#) I had with Madeline, Jennifer, and Rich on [my BAM! Radio Show](#). You can also find a list of, and links to, [previous shows here](#).

I've written about my classroom seating arrangements—and responded to criticism of them—at [Leading With Inquiry, Not Judgment](#).

You might also be interested in [The Best Resources On Classroom Seating Strategies](#).

### Response From Jennifer Orr

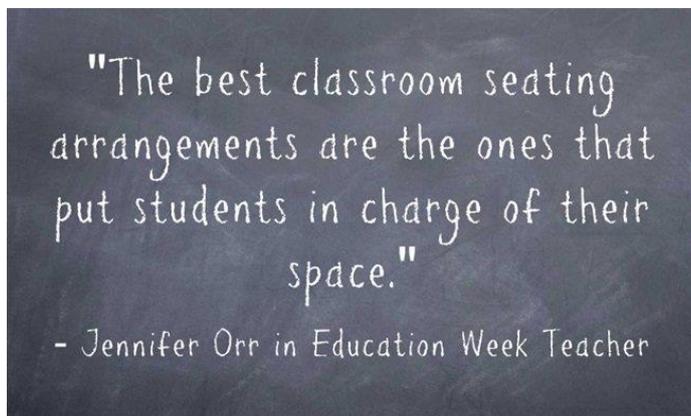
Jennifer Orr has been an elementary school classroom teacher for 20 years in Title I schools in northern Virginia:

Think about the places in which you feel most comfortable working. What are you looking for? Is it always the same or does it depend on what you are doing? I know I prefer to work sitting in ways that are close to lounging, stretching my legs out. I'm perfectly content to have my notepad or laptop on my lap rather than on a table or desk. At least that's all true if I'm working on my own. When I'm collaborating with others, I tend to prefer to sit around a table so that we're all at a similar height and in close proximity.

Students are no different. They do not all want to sit in the same chairs at the same tables all the time. The best classroom seating arrangements are the ones that put students in charge of their space. Students, even very young ones, are able to make decisions about where and how to work in order to do their very best.

Allowing students to be in charge of their space requires a very flexible classroom. It requires lots of options from which students can choose. This might include tables of varying sizes and heights. In my 3rd grade classroom, I have one table that is tall enough for my students to stand while they work there. Several different tables have stools or chairs of different types. A couple of tables are low to the ground so students can sit on the floor as they work there. The tables are also different sizes. One table is large enough for eight or more students to fit. Others will only hold one or two. Depending on task and mood, students can decide which option is best for them at that moment.

Other types of seating are also good options. We have several beanbags, as well as a couch in our classroom. We have a box full of clipboards in case students want to work somewhere away from a table and need that surface. One of my students last year did his best writing on a clipboard, stretched out under one of our tables. It looked terribly uncomfortable to me but was definitely his go to spot.



In order to do our best work, to be focused and thinking hard, we need to be comfortable. If the only options students have are all the exact same chairs at the exact same tables, only a handful are likely to be truly comfortable. Even just offering them the option of the floor will be empowering and mean that a few more are ready to do

their best work. This may sound challenging, but engage your students around the question. They'll come up with some fabulous solutions!

### Response From Madeline Whitaker Good

Madeline Whitaker Good has taught elementary and middle school, and is currently a middle school teacher in Springfield, Mo. She is a co-author of *Your First Year*:

This is such a hot topic with many educators today. With so many options, from collaborative tables to beanbag chairs, many people have found themselves in "tribes" that swear by their own classroom's seating arrangement. Although there is some research that shows certain arrangements are more effective than others, I argue that the main driver of a classroom's seating situation should be what the teacher needs to be most effective instructionally. When I think back to my favorite teacher I ever had, it was my high school AP English teacher. She pushed us to think critically, significantly increased my writing ability, and supported students sharing their thoughts about a variety of texts. This was all done while we were sitting in .... traditional desks that were placed in .... rows. \*Gasp!\* I know. **Desks in rows?! How could she?**

"Focus on what helps students learn with your style of teaching, and as long as you have evidence to show it is working, you have a good seating arrangement in my book."

Madeline Whitaker Good in Education Week  
Teacher

The thing is, she was a phenomenal teacher, and placing desks in rows for most of the school year helped her be the rock star teacher that she was. She would sometimes move them around for important class discussions, but most of the time they were in plain old traditional rows. And that was OK. Her class was the one I learned the most in high school. By far.

I am not sharing this to defend the placement of desks in rows. If you walked into my math classroom today, I have tables placed in groupings of four students each, but I don't have it this way because someone forced me to or because I felt like it was the latest trend. I have it this way because it works best for how I run my classroom.

If you take anything away from this response, I hope that it is that you should arrange your seats in a way that best supports student learning in your classroom. Don't fret over the latest trends you see on Twitter or what the "cool" teacher is doing down the hallway. Focus on what helps students learn with your style of teaching, and as long as you have evidence to show it is working, you have a good seating arrangement in my book.

### Response From Rich Czyz

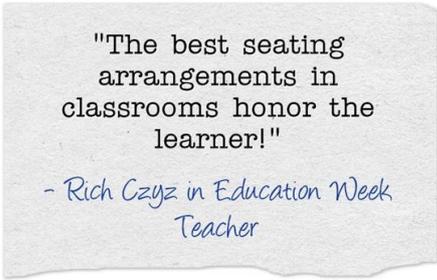
Rich Czyz is the author of *The Four O'Clock Faculty: A ROGUE Guide to Revolutionizing Professional Development* and the co-founder of the Four O'Clock Faculty Blog. He is currently an elementary principal in New Jersey and was a former 5th grade and basic-skills math

teacher, as well as a curriculum supervisor and director of curriculum & instruction. Rich is passionate about engaging all stakeholders in meaningful and relevant learning opportunities:

The best seating arrangements are those that place students at the forefront of the decisionmaking process in terms of getting the most out of learning experiences. Learners (both students and teachers) should have the flexibility to make sure that the environment matches the learning experience. There also need to be seating options in meeting the needs of all students.

These principles are most important when thinking about classroom design:

- **Start with tables.** Beg, borrow, or trade to (almost) get rid of student desks and use tables. They open up the classroom, and create a more collaborative setting for learners. Keep in mind that not all learners prefer to sit at a table, and that one or two students may still want that desk. Save just one or two desks for this reason.
- **Open, flexible seating works best.** Let learners choose where to sit depending on the task. Give them lots of options: big chairs, small chairs, no chairs, standing tables or desks, low tables... Any option is a good option. With modeling of flexible-seating expectations, students will become much more productive in the way they work in the classroom.
- **Go beyond the classroom.** Don't confine students using your four walls or your expectations for what a learning space looks like. Use hallways, nooks, crannies, outcoves, outside learning space... Anywhere that students learn best provide the best learning spaces. There should be no limits placed on how or where students learn.
- **Leave plenty of open space.** Many classrooms are full of motivational posters, information, and other "decorations" that actually hinder the learning process rather than help it. Keep in mind that learners need open space. Open space in terms of the floor plan will allow students to move furniture to match the learning activity. Open wall space (preferably writing space!) allows students to do their best work. Make the space as learner-centered and learner-friendly as possible.
- **Simple fixes go a long way.** Any changes you make to your learning environment don't have to be drastic or cost a great deal of money. One of the easiest improvements you can make in your classroom involves raising or lowering table legs to create standing tables or floor tables (Students sit on cushions or mats on the floor). Consider simple fixes like moving furniture or getting rid of a teacher desk to create more space. Not every fix needs to involve spending money or putting forth a great deal of effort.



"The best seating arrangements in classrooms honor the learner!"

- Rich Czyz in Education Week  
Teacher

Keep in mind that the best seating arrangements in classrooms honor the learner! Always consider the purpose of your design. Ask yourself, what am I trying to accomplish and how can the classroom design and organization help me reach that goal?

## Response From Tan Huynh

Tan Huynh is a Teach For America alumnus and the head of the English Language Acquisition Department at Vientiane International School, an International Baccalaureate World School. He shares his classroom-tested, research-supported strategies on [his blog](#):

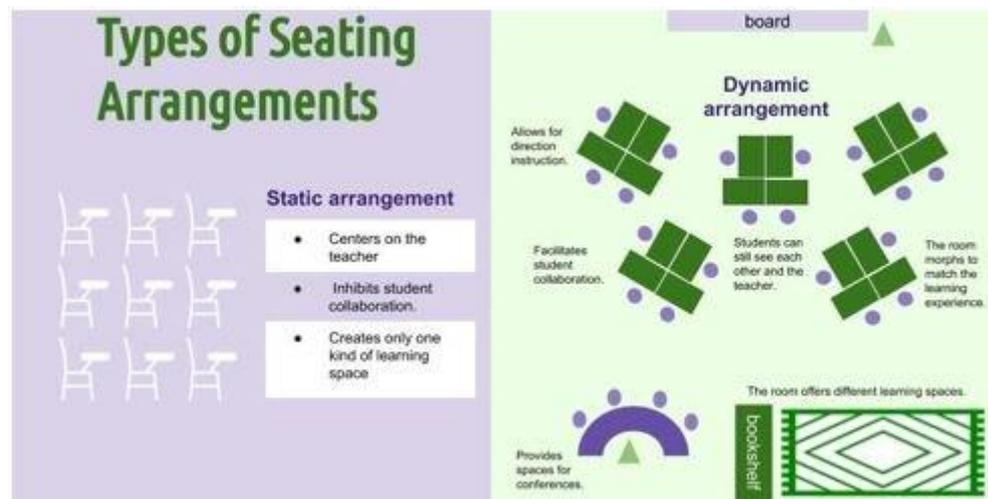
*I'm less concerned with how seats are arranged in a class than with how students are interacting with each other. Just as students don't interact in only one way, no single seating arrangement will work for every lesson. Instead, there's dynamic seating.*

*Dynamic seating means moving the furniture to align with a learning activity and setting up the kind of student interaction we want. Sometimes, we require rows for testing while other times we need small groups for interacting.*

*Dynamic seating allows for the class to change shape so that students can collaborate with each other or work individually. It allows for whole-group or small-group instruction. In primary classrooms that follow the dynamic-seating principle, we often see different zones—each zone used for a particular learning activity. Zones are often marked by clusters of tables or rugs and partitioned by bookshelves or easels. In secondary classrooms with dynamic seating, seats are moved from rows into small groups.*

*Students can easily arrange even awkward dairs (desks attached to chairs) so that they can both easily interact with each other and quickly turn to face the board during direct instruction. The layout of the dairs is extremely adaptable: It can facilitate either direct instruction or student collaboration, whatever you need.*

*The opposite of a dynamic arrangement is a static arrangement, which means that regardless of the activity, the seating stays the same. In static classes, students spend most of their time in rows facing the board and listening to the teacher.*



*Only a fraction of the time is spent interacting with other students—if any. Also, there are no zones for different types of activities. This is not ideal.*

*Our room is like a lesson plan. If we differentiate lessons for students, then we should also differentiate where students sit. If we design student-centered lessons, then we should also design seating arrangements that maximize learning.*

"I'm less concerned with how seats are arranged in a class than with how students are interacting with each other."

Tan Huynh in Education Week Teacher

Image by Tan Huynh

### Response From Mark J. Westpfahl

Mark J. Westpfahl is a two-time Minnesota teacher of the year semifinalist and serves on the board of directors for the Minnesota Council for the Social Studies. He is a former member of the Inver Grove Heights board of education and is in his 10th year of teaching in the Saint Paul public schools:

*In the early stages of my teaching career, my room looked like your average classroom with traditional desks. But I rarely kept the desks aligned in perfectly spaced rows, as it always felt like I was taking the easy way out. Instead, I would arrange the desks into different configurations. Sometimes, I did this just because I didn't want my room to be a stagnant place that didn't draw inspiration and other times, I strategically redesigned the room to correlate with a lesson or activity that we were doing.*

*While I did appreciate that the desks and chairs could be arranged in numerous configurations, I started to run into a larger problem. The desks and chairs were starting to fall into disrepair. When I would bring this up to my administration and custodial team, I was repeatedly told that there was nothing that could be done, as the district did not have replacement desks/chairs and there was no budget for new ones.*

*I had students that were sitting on the countertops and on our floor (which desperately needed a carpet replacement) because I had several classes with more than 40 students and only 33 functioning desks.*

*I had researched the flex-seating trend for several months and decided that I needed to take matters into my own hands. After spending numerous hours online looking for potential furniture pieces that would provide style and comfort for my students, I realized that my vision to transform my room may be unrealistic. I started to ask students what they wanted in how a classroom should be designed. Overwhelmingly, they said they wanted seats that were not hard as a rock. Many suggested a loungelike area that had soft and comfortable eating like a Starbucks, Caribou Coffee, a doctor's office, or a library on a college campus.*

*Toward the end of the 2016-17 school year, the Minnesota state Capitol was undergoing a renovation, and hundreds of pieces of furniture from the building were being auctioned off. I thought it would be cool to have comfortable AND historic seats! So, I created a Go Fund Me campaign to raise approximately \$250 so I could purchase some of the historic furniture I could put in my classroom. I was stoked! With nine days left in the school year, I brought in the new furniture. My students were excited, and that was all the motivation I needed to go bigger! I created another fundraiser and received nearly \$3,500 to completely transform the room.*

*I purchased desks and end tables that had power outlets and USB ports so students could always be plugged in while in the classroom, another thing that students had requested. I knew I wanted window seating overlooking our beautiful atrium, so I decided that I needed to custom build that. The end result has been*

*something my students have enjoyed. The #CHCougars #flexseating #learninglounge is a place where my students can learn about history in comfort, while actually sitting on historic furniture!*

### **Response From Mark J. Westpfahl**

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*Here are some video tours of what the classroom looks like at the beginning of each new quarter:*



[Mark J. Westpfahl](#)@MarkJWestpfahl

We're #backtoschool today. It's the delayed start to the 3rd quarter in our newly rearranged #CHCougars #flexseating #learninglounge. No graveyard style seating in this room! Historic @mncapitol furniture, Metrodome seats & education learning trunks. Oh, and an outhouse!

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[4:27 PM - Feb 1, 2019](#)



[See Mark J. Westpfahl's other Tweets](#)

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)



[Mark J. Westpfahl](#)@MarkJWestpfahl

It's finally ready! Come take a tour of our #flexseating #learninglounge. I can't wait to kick off the new year on Tuesday. #CHCougars @SPPS\_News #cozyclassroom #flexibleseating #learningspaces #studentchoice #comfort #education #edchat #sschat #firstdayofschool @EducationMN

See Mark J. Westpfahl's other Tweets

### Twitter Ads info and privacy



Thanks to Madeline, Jennifer, Rich, Tan, and Mark for their contributions.

Please feel free to leave a comment with your reactions to the topic or directly to anything that has been said in this post.

Consider contributing a question to be answered in a future post. You can send one to me at [lferlazzo@epe.org](mailto:lferlazzo@epe.org). When you send it in, let me know if I can use your real name if it's selected or if you'd prefer remaining anonymous and have a pseudonym in mind.

You can also contact me on Twitter at [@Larryferlazzo](https://twitter.com/Larryferlazzo).

**"I started to ask students what they wanted in how a classroom should be designed. Overwhelmingly, they said they wanted seats that were not hard as a rock."**

- Mark J. Westpfahl in Education Week Teacher

**GAZİ UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**  
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH UNIT**

By  
*Aslı Atalı Altuntaş*

Gazi University College of Foreign Languages Professional Development Unit was founded at the end of the 2010-2011 academic year after its members completed a 500-hour Teacher Trainer Training Programme which was carried out by the professionals in the field and lasted eight months. This year the unit has gone under some reconstruction. In this respect, Professional Development Unit and Research and Project Unit were united and gathered under one single roof as Professional Development and Research Unit.

The unit embraces the belief that teaching requires continuous learning, and accordingly aims to organise events and activities (such as, workshops, swap shops, social events, etc.) intended to promote the continuous learning and development of its lecturers. The unit applies questionnaires to both lecturers and students; deals with the distribution of the scores of each skill after each midterm and does research in accordance with the scientific data. The primary purpose of the unit is to provide professional development and cooperation among lecturers, and to establish a more efficient teaching and learning environment. While achieving this objective, the unit seeks to maintain a continuous professional development culture in the institution in which most current and effective approaches, methods, techniques and equipment that are used in foreign language education are introduced, providing opportunities for the professional development of the instructors and communicative development of the students.

Some of the CPD activities offered by the Professional Development and Research Unit are as follows:

**\*Orientation Program**

Orientation program of Gazi University School of Foreign Languages consists of three basic steps. In the first step, new teachers are introduced to the educational system, academic and administrative staff, student profile, approach to language teaching and syllabus before they start teaching in this institution. In the second step, a series of input sessions are provided to new teachers in which their ELT knowledge is refreshed and upgraded. In the third step, new teachers prepare a demo lesson and teach a specific subject in their course books which they are going to use during the academic year. Their sessions are observed and they are given feedback at a post meeting by PDU staff about the observed lesson.

**\*In-service training program**

The in-service training program consists mainly of workshops, seminars and in-class observations within the institution. The workshops are organized by PDU staff in relation to the needs, interests and expectations of the language instructors, which are determined by a needs assessment procedure either at the beginning or end of the year. The workshops are

regularly held on predetermined dates throughout the academic year. Besides, language instructors are given seminars by different CPD experts on the topics of interests and needs. The main aims of the workshops and seminars is to provide language instructors with practical knowledge to implement in their classrooms and to sustain their motivation for the innovations within the field of ELT.

### **\*PDR Unit on Social Media**

It is possible to follow us on Instagram (@gazimeslekgelisim). Also, if you would like to share your ideas related to our account and help us improve the idea, please send emails to our email address. ([pdrunit@gmail.com](mailto:pdrunit@gmail.com))

### **\*Observations**

In-class observations are conducted on voluntary basis to share knowledge, experience, and insight into classroom practices. Different observation types are offered by the unit for the professional needs of the lecturers. They are ;

- PDR Unit observations
- Peer Observations
- Self (Video) Observation
- Blind Observation

### **\*Newsletter (UPDATED COMMUNITY)**

Our newsletter, Updated Community, aims to keep our colleagues up-to-date, spark new interest in, and increase recognition of our institution. The newsletters are produced by the members of the PDR Unit, our colleagues and guest authors. We have recently published our 3rd issue and have started to work on the 4th one.

### **\*Blog**

PDU members have created a blog for continuing professional development (CPD) In the blog you can find:

- Newsletter archive
- Announcements related to PDU activities
- ELT Seminars & Webinars
- Workshops by the PDU members
- PDF formats of the workshops
- Feedback Section about workshops and other PDU activities
- Teacher Training Opportunities
- Suggestions Section
- Useful links to use in class

### **\*Workshops**

Workshops are prepared and presented by PDR Unit members and other colleagues who would like to share their studies with their colleagues in the institution. The topics for the workshops are generally selected according to the needs analysis questionnaires conducted every year. Workshops are announced via email, Instagram account, blog, and also posters and invitation letters are stuck on the walls and lecturers' doors one week before the events.

## **WRITE - WRITE - WRITE GET BETTER & BETTER- II**

This is Part 2 of sample short essays by university students who tried their hands at expressing themselves on the topic of culture shock.

This is what their instructor M. Nazlı Demirbaş wrote as a brief introduction to these students' background:

*Student teachers are provided with content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, general knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge courses during the four-year long English language teaching (ELT) programmes in Turkey. As part of the content knowledge courses, "writing skills" is a course which aims to develop student teachers' writing paragraph and essay skills through different topics in both academic terms. Although ELT programmes have a standard syllabus introduced by Council of Higher Education, each university follows different contents. For example, in Gazi University ELT programme, the writing skills course is introduced to student teachers through EAP (English for Academic Purposes) topics to help them raise their awareness, motivate them in the field, do some basic research about the hotly debated issues, and prepare them for the coming pedagogical content knowledge courses. In this course, student teachers are introduced to styles and strategies of paragraph and essay writing. They are asked to write paragraphs on the integration of culture into ELT, native-non-native dilemma, and the value of English in Turkish context as an international language, following paragraph types in the first term. In the second term, they are asked to write essays on topics by comparing and contrasting the culture shock in different contexts, by focusing on the causes and effects of failure in teaching English in Turkey, and by arguing the younger the better hypothesis. As a reinforcement to the Gazi ELT student teachers whose performances were outstanding in terms of structure, writing style and idea generation, some of them are sent for review to be published in INGED Newsletter. The below essays represent the ones which were found to be promising and selected by the editor. Student teachers express their experiences, analysis, and observations on "culture shock" through cause and effect essays. Enjoy reading!*

### **Culture Shock in Education and Business**

**By  
Buse Koçak**

Culture shock is one of the most grueling experiences an individual has to go through after moving to a new location and contacting with a fundamentally different culture. It is almost inevitable resulting from losing all familiar signs and symbols of oriented situations of daily life (Oberg, 1954). The visits to a new location can be for various reasons such as studying in a new country or doing business in different countries. Also, various reasons can trigger culture shock such as values, language or rules of behavior. However, although the culture shock in education and business appears to be different, they share a number of similarities.

Firstly, culture shock in education and business is alike in terms of facing several difficulties resulting from language. Specifically, sociolinguistic differences such as phrases and sayings in the language can be the reason for culture shock for both international students and business people. To illustrate, common phrases of language such as "I am sorry" or "excuse

me” can be baffling for international students. Similarly, business people can be surprised by using “please” or “thank you” in almost every sentence. Moreover, unfamiliar ‘rules’ for social interaction can trigger culture shock for both of them. According to the study, expanded and tested Furnham and Bochner’s model of culture shock (Furnham & Bochner, 1986), international students experience adjustment difficulties because they are not aware of the implicit social rules that regulate interaction in the host country (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004). Likewise, differences in social interaction such as over-friendly and polite sayings from random people are likely to be confusing for business people.

Secondly, culture shock in education and business is similar in terms of having problems due to physical setting. Many international students and business people find that climate affects them a great deal. To exemplify, moving from a temperature climate with four distinct seasons to a year-round tropical hot and humid climate can reinforce the feelings of culture shock (Tidwell, Emeritus, 2018). Furthermore, strange environment can be another reason for culture shock. Something as minor as differences in advertising and street signage (Tidwell, Emeritus, 2018) or the level of noise is likely to affect both international students and business people.

Despite the similarities in language and physical setting, there are still differences between culture shock in education and business. Crowds and buildings which are tight in space are some of the elements that contribute to culture shock for international students. However, apart from these things, there are other elements that affect business people such as negotiations, punctuality or meetings. In business life, some countries extremely value punctuality and view latecomers as disrespectful and unreliable. Thus, keeping to time is important and people in international business should always be on time for meetings with administrative staff. Also, understanding the body language and dressing with respect and authority can play a great role to avoid making costly mistakes in overseas meetings (Mulhern, 1998).

In conclusion, there are similarities between culture shock in education and business in terms of experiencing difficulties because of language and physical setting. However, the differences in other factors, such as punctuality and body language in meetings, cannot be ignored. The differences between cultures and the challenge of dealing with them can make it difficult to adjust to the new surroundings. Nevertheless, those feelings are a part of adapting to a new culture and the good news is that culture shock is temporary.

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## **Different Aspects of Culture Shock**

**By**

**Elif Ergül**

Have you ever felt both delighted and agitated at the same time when you travel to another country? At first, most people experience being uncomfortable, confused, discouraged, lonely and anxious when they cross cultures, which is called culture shock, because of not knowing the new country's normal behaviors, cultural signals, rules and appropriate reactions to that culture. Those feelings turn from negative to positive ones like being friendly, open-minded, tolerant, cheerful, faithful because by time the person who experiences culture shock starts to understand many aspects of the new culture, makes friends, discovers courteous people and learns how to balance the values of the home country and the new community. Even though most people experience same stages, everyone's adventure differs one from another according to their purposes, characteristics, the time they stay in the country. Short-term visitors and the exchange students provide a good example of two aspects of culture shock that are physically in the same position but that still find fundamental differences.

The first difference between short term visitors and the exchange students' culture shock is the usage of English. An individual's personality plays a role in how they react to new experiences and the extent to which they are willing to put themselves in awkward situations to learn the new social rules, language itself (Yale, 2017). Despite the chance of talking in English, short-term visitors prefer talking with the Turkish people in the US. Effected by the sheer amount of Turkish people that live within the community, they do not need to speak English with the fear of losing their identities that define their roles in society. As Yale (2017) stated "The further the cultural distance between the home culture and the culture of the host country, the more likely it is that an individual feel discomfort and difficulty in social interactions." (p.1), which defines the reason why short-term visitors fear. Not only the Turkish people but also the lack of time for interaction obviate the need for using English. While the short-term visitors do not lean towards talking in English, the exchange students interact with multicultural and native students. Even if students do not feel the feeling of belonging to the school, they must be in an interaction with the students all over the world which help them to practice English they are looking for. As an exchange student, the attention they get end up with friendship. Hearing new English words and expressions, highly stressful but exciting thing in their life, make them feel lonely in the crowd but later on they start to break the language barrier and speak their minds to their friends in English.

The second difference between short-term visitors and the exchange students' culture shock is food. Experiencing a new culture even for couple of days could be confounding and discomforting especially when it comes to food, our need to survive. Short-term visitors, who are more skeptical about it, favor shopping in Turkish groceries and restaurants. They do not try new tastes of US while students, who have limited options, taste the American food. For them, the US food even the breads, meat, sauce is extremely sweet which means there is a ton of sugar and unnatural products used in it to sweeten the food. The students with limited budgets find US's portion of lunch quite affordable and satisfying because even 3 persons can have enough food from just one portion.

The final difference between short-term visitors and the exchange students' culture shock is the life-style. When you travel or move to a new region, your daily routine, attitudes of people around you, and overall environment are completely different, and the process of recognizing, comprehending, and eventually adapting to these differences is the foundation of culture shock (Murphy, R, 2017). Not having enough time to comprehend the culture, short-term visitors can observe only the physical parts of the country and its culture. While they are observing the tourist attractions, what make them feel amazed is the size in the US. Everything is enormous in US contrary to their hometown such as cars, lanes, houses, people (the number of obese people), land quantities and food. Unlike their country, the traffic laws in US are very strict. They were not careful about not tailgating people, not rolling up slowly to a stoplight just because it is red and stopping fully at the stop sign, that make them get a ticket on their first day in US. Compared to the short-term visitors, exchange students have more opportunities to observe the country as whole. At first, by observing people's attitudes towards each other, they see that people live personal life, their relationship and kindness are just for showing off. After thinking that US people are though, they start to understand the culture, people and even help the other exchange students who do not adapt easily, which make them get rid off the period of being lonely in the crowd. To understand different attitudes of the students, Shu, McAbee, and Ayman (2016) explore how personality traits affect cross-cultural adjustment among international students in the US. Their research supports the idea that individuals with personality traits such as extraversion and conscientiousness are likely to adjust more easily to new cultures.

In conclusion, short-term visitors are similar to the exchange students in culture shock's physical and negative effects, yet different in usage of English, food and life-style. Both aspects of culture shock show that one's reaction to it differs from one to another in terms of their aims, personality and the length of travel. To cope with the adjustment process people should not hide out in their apartments; they should get involved by joining clubs, activities on the campus, respect the differences, experience the new culture, explore the country and make themselves feel comfortable. As George Santayana (1964) stated "There is a wisdom in turning as often as possible from the familiar to the unfamiliar: it keeps the mind nimble, it kills prejudice, and it fosters humor" (p.15).

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## **My Reverse-Culture Shock**

**By**

**Enes Talha Tunçer**

Many people experience culture shock when they go abroad; however, this can also happen when they come back to their homeland. And this is called "Reverse-Culture Shock". But what is reverse culture shock exactly? In my opinion, it is something that people experience when they come back to their homeland from the country to whose culture they were accustomed. That's why those people undergo some problems in their social life and struggle because of cultural differences. As people are social creatures they tend to adapt to their environment and find the similarities between two different cultures. Despite this effort, people may encounter some differences while experiencing reverse culture shock that cannot be resembled to each other or dealt with easily such as social principles, education, social relationships and building characteristic features.

Firstly, whether it's a developed, developing, Eastern or Western Country, all countries have a different education system and curriculum. Students who are experiencing reverse culture shock may face some problems because they abandoned their familiar style of education and meet a different one. For example, when I was 10 years old it had been five years since I moved to Germany from Turkey. After 5 years of education in Germany, I and my family moved back to Turkey and I continued my education there as a fifth-grade student. Everything was fine until I realized that the curriculum was totally different and students were way ahead in mathematics and science. Furthermore, as my Turkish was not good enough to understand exactly what my teachers say, I also fell behind the class in lessons like social studies, Turkish, etc. After these struggles, I tried to get help from my classmates. However, the more I tried to bond with them, the more they excluded me because of my lacking communication skills and weird accent. All those difficulties that I experienced were considered by my parents as a trauma that would affect my future life. To sum up, students who are experiencing Reverse Culture shock, fall behind their class, cannot keep up with their coevals and get low grades, consequently, they struggle in their future education and academic careers.

Secondly, throughout history, every nation formed a different and unique culture, language and lifestyle. And as they are all different someone who encounters a new culture, even if it is their old one, they may have reverse culture shock. These differences are celebrations and how they are being celebrated, general moral principles and national holidays. If we consider the differences between Germany and Turkey, there are a lot of differences that cannot be ignored. For instance, as I lived there when I was very young our teachers used to make us celebrate every kind of celebration such as Christmas, Easter, and, etc. We used to wear costumes, go to other houses to get candy and set off fireworks. When I moved back to Turkey, I realized that except for a few dull celebrations no one cared about the entertainment of the children and I was devastated when I found out that. Moreover in Germany, even if it was not their own celebrations they allowed Muslim children not to come to school when it was a Muslim bairam. However, they were not always so tolerant. When it came to individual relations, they were like robots with no emotions. To exemplify, once I fell off my bike badly in front of a whole class with a teacher going to school-trip. They all saw me crying and bleeding but still, no one even stoops to glance at me for the

second time. But in Turkey, people were so helpful even at the slightest events. Like, when I asked someone to describe where a location was, they were so enthusiastic that most of them offered a ride or walked with me until there. Of course, there were also some religious differences such as hearing the azan, seeing people in hijabs more often and bairams, etc. Before I went to Germany I had lived in Turkey for 5 years. As a result of that, I did not have a religious identity; that is why, I was really surprised when I came back to my hometown and saw all the different stuff.

Finally, after going through all those obstacles no person can stay mentally healthy, neither could I. According to Olberg and Mio "Culture shock may be defined as the psychological disorientation experienced by people who suddenly enter radically different cultural environments to live and work" (as cited in" *International Journal of Human Resource Management*), "Although not everyone will experience all the symptoms, almost all people will experience some parts. The major symptoms may be described as depression, anxiety, and feelings of helplessness (Mio, 1999). As they state, more or less everyone experiences culture shock inevitably and everyone develops his own methods to overcome his struggle. For example, I tried to communicate with my classmates and expected them to teach me everything I need, but as I mentioned before I was always excluded and this method failed. Thus, my failure let me to find other methods, like lying. I thought if I lie, they would like me and stop excluding me. However, my lies were not very realistic that is why this method failed, as well. With time, new people and me starting to High-school, I filled the big blanks, made friends and adapted the country.

In conclusion, culture shock affects us both psychologically and socially. As it is a whole new culture, education system and social life prevent us from being extrovert, having good relations with people and they also have a bad impact on our future and education. And just because we are coming back to our previous culture does not mean that we are exempt from its effects. As mentioned before, more or less, everyone experiences reverse culture shock and everyone develops different strategies and methods to overcome it.

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## The Effects of Culture Shock

By  
Erdal Yüksel

In today's world, people from all countries and groups need to get their education in order to be able to compete with the global world. According to this, sometimes students might

travel to another enhanced country to complete their education, but in some countries like Turkey, some students might leave their big cities for small ones due to their inadequate abilities for being educated in well-qualified universities. Considering these events, movements of students might end up with the culture shock in some cases, but what is culture shock? Culture shock can be defined as ‘the distress experienced by the sojourner as a result of losing all the familiar signs and symbols’ (Oberg, 1960) Although some people think that students cannot understand what culture shock is when they leave their cities, students generally experience culture shock due to differences between two cultures and living styles & conditions.

In the first place, students experience culture shock because of the differences between two cultures in big and small city. First of all, to be able to understand the effects of cultural differences, we should know what culture is. In one definition it is said that, ‘Culture becomes the lens through which we perceive and evaluate what is going on around us.’(Henslin, 1993) To begin with, differences in two culture might effect the student negatively. In small cities, people might act a bit more conservative compared to the big ones. As an illustration, when a student is born in a big city, he/she gets used to live in a more relaxed way, or it can be said that, in small cities, people behave more carefully if they want to be regarded as someone good, and also, people in small cities are more into their religion, so students might feel some pressure at the beginning. Another aspect is that, in one country, there can be many accents according to the specialities of cultures, and that can also effect students negatively. For example, in Turkey, we have lots of accents in our different parts of regions that foreigners cannot understand. It is pretty possible that a student who comes from a big city will experience an adaptation process in his/her daily life when talking with the native students or local people. In brief, differences in culture and accent might end up with a culture shock for student.

Further, students experience culture shock because of the differences between living styles & conditions among big and small city. One of the most important thing in students’ lives is socializing with others. ‘Socialization can be defined as the process by which people learn to become members of a society.’ (Tepperman & Curtis, 2011, p.58) Socializing can be examined in two aspects; socializing with people or places to socialize. When students come from a big city to small one, they experience both of these aspects. To illustrate, people in small cities are tend to live without rush and they are mostly fan of staying in their homes or with their families rather than going out, so for a foreign student, finding the right person to socialize is pretty difficult. Also, finding the right place to hang out is difficult as well. A city that counted as big has lots of opportunities for students to kill time, but in a small city, as the number of the students is less when we compare it with other cities, tradesmen are not into opening places for students to not to get bankrupt, and for that reason, students experience difficulties at finding place for relaxing & socialize. Moreover, living conditions in small cities can also cause culture shock for students. When we consider living conditions, we can mention about transportation & places for food. Students are human beings that have the passion to see new places and to try varied flavours, but these activites are not that easy for students in small towns. Rather than big cities, in transportation, small cities have less opportunities. In bigger cities, one can use every transportation system in every hour, However; small towns provide few buses, and they are mostly used for one artery, so

inadequacies in transportation is likely to effect students in a negative way. In addition, tasting different dishes in different restaurants is also important for students, but in small towns, rather than big ones, one does not have the opportunity to taste that much food. To give a clear example, people from all countries who are dealing with food come to big towns to establish some local food restaurants and to earn their livings, so these kind of places are almost impossible to be seen by the students who are getting their education in small towns. Shortly, the inadequancies in living styles & conditions carry the risk of forming culture shock for students.

Eventually, there are many things that cause culture shock, but what are the pros and cons in big and small towns for students? In small cities we can talk about few advantages for students. First of all the cost of living is cheap. Students are getting paid by their parents, and they do not have lots of money, so small towns might be suitable for them. Second of all, the time you spent in traffic is less, considering this, students are not likely to be late for their classes. Although small cities have some advantages, their disadvantages are far more than that. Other than school, there is nothing to do there for students. A boring lifestyle is not an option that students would choose. Education in small towns are not that qualified. Big cities have big universities, and they provide every opportunity for their students, so it is hard for students in small towns to get educated properly. It is proved that, in small cities, internet connections are slower. Nowadays, internet is the main source of the students in their studies, so slower connection means slower researches for students. Privacy is another aspect. In small towns, every movement that student makes will be seen, so this situation is not good for their freedoms. All in all, as big cities have much more opportunities than the small ones, a student that comes from a big one will most probably experience some culture shock.

In conclusion, in this world, sometimes some of us have to move from our homelands to somewhere foreign to accomplish something that our lives require. Especially, students might leave their hometowns to complete their education processes. We all know that they are leaving their families, friends and childhoods behind, However; despite of the culture shock, one can achieve overcoming the negative effects of it and maintain his life according to what global world wants.

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## **Culture Shock in the United States and China**

**By**

**Gamze Demirkan**

In today's world, students have various opportunities to go abroad. However, these kinds of travels have some disadvantages, such as culture shock. "Culture shock is a multifaceted

experience resulting from numerous stressors occurring in contact with an unlike culture” (Winkelman, 1994). Examples of culture shock can differ from country to country. For example, the United States and China provide a good example of the different culture shock for a student and have fundamental differences but that still include commonality.

Firstly, there is a significant difference in terms of triggering the culture shock between the United States and China in their rates of multiculturalism. The ethnicity of the United States is Asian, American, Alaskan, Hawaiian and the ones from other islands. The multicultural nature of society in the United States creates daily cross-cultural conflict, making cultural shock an important source of interpersonal stress for many (Winkelman, 1994). However, in China, 91.6% of the population is Chinese, which makes it easy to understand the new culture and achieve an effective adaptation.

Secondly, another key difference which affects the culture shock is eating habits in the United States and China. Both of the countries have radically different cuisine, which means two unlike culture shock. In the United States, about three-fourths of the population has an eating pattern that is low in vegetables, fruits, dairy, and oils because their basic nutritional sources are fast foods and snacks. Americans consume 31% more packaged food than fresh food (Fairfield, 2014). This may cause uneasiness for students about which kinds of foods will put on weight and which kinds of foods are healthy. On the other hand, the Chinese diet and eating customs are very different from those of America. Chinese cuisine consists of mostly seafood and vegetables which are considered as healthy. Moreover, nearly all meals are shared, and the use of chopsticks rather than a knife and fork are ingrained in the culture of China. These are vital differences when compared with other cultures, and for other cultures’ students, it will be the reason for cultural distress.

Finally, despite the differences in the rate of multiculturalism and eating habits, there is still a similarity about culture shock between the United States and China in language and nonverbal patterns. Although different languages are used in both countries, their reflections on culture shock are the same. When a person enters an environment in which people are having different language characteristics, culture shock would appear (Fan, 2010). Those characteristics might include immense diversity of vocabulary, pronunciation, preposition, grammar, intonation and so on. The lack of knowledge about those language characteristics is one of the biggest causes of the culture shock. Language characteristics are essential factors in understanding another culture, but it is also necessary to learn a wide range of nonverbal communication patterns. For instance, the Chinese beckoning gesture is a hand extended toward the person with the palm down, moving the fingers back and forth. This is often confusing to Americans, as it appears as if the person is waving goodbye. The American beckoning gesture, an upward-facing palm with the index finger moving back and forth, is considered offensive in China as they avoid pointing with one finger. A successful adaptation requires learning the host culture’s nonverbal communication patterns; otherwise, the culture shock will be inevitable.

To sum up, there are differences between the culture shock in the United States and China in terms of multiculturalism and eating habits. However, the similarity in the language and nonverbal communication patterns cannot be ignored. These points are significant

components of the culture shock and have a great impact on intercultural competence. For overcoming those cultural problems, students should be aware of cultural diversity and use skills for resolving crises.

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# INTERNET ACRONYMS

Acronyms A to L	
2F4U	Too Fast For You
4YEO FYEO	For Your Eyes Only
AAMOF	As a Matter of Fact
ACK	Acknowledgment
AFAIK	As far as I know
AFAIR	As far as I remember / recall
AFK	Away from Keyboard
AKA	Also known as
B2K BTK	Back to Keyboard
BTT	Back to Topic
BTW	By the Way
B/C	Because
C&P	Copy and Paste
CU	See you
CYS	Check your Settings
DIY	Do it Yourself
EOBD	End of Business Day
EOD	End of Discussion
EOM	End of Message
EOT	End of Thread / .. Text / .. Transmission
FAQ	Frequently asked Questions
FAK	Full Acknowledge
FKA	Formerly known as
FWIW	For what it's Worth
FYI / JFYI	(Just) For your Information
HF	Have fun
HTH	Hope this Helps
IIRC	If I Recall / Remember Correctly
IMHO	In my Humble Opinion
IMO	In my Opinion
IMNSHO	In my not so Humble / Honest Opinion
IOW	In other Words
ITT	In this Thread
LOL	Laughing out loud

Acronyms M to Z	
MMW	Mark my Words
N/A	Not Available / Applicable
NaN	Not a Number
NNTR	No need to Reply
noob n00b	Newbie
NOYB	None of your Business
NRN	No Reply Necessary
OMG	Oh my God
OP	Original Poster, Original Post
OT	Off Topic
OTOH	On the other Hand
PEBKAC	Problem exists between Keyboard and Chair
POV	Point of View
ROTFL	Rolling on the Floor Laughing
RSVP	Repondez s'il vous plait (French: Please reply)
RTFM	Read the fine Manual
SCNR	Sorry, could not Resist
SFLR	Sorry, for late Reply
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
TBA	To be Announced
TBC	To be Continued / To be Confirmed
TIA	Thanks in Advance
THX TNX	Thanks
TQ	Thank You
TYVM	Thank You Very Much
TYT	Take your Time
TTYL	Talk to you Later
w00t	Whoomp, there it is; Meaning "Hooray"
WFM	Works for Me
WRT	With Regard to
WTH	What the Hell / What the Heck
YMMD	You made my Day
YMMV	Your Mileage may vary
YAM	Yet Another Meeting