

# **TEACHING TIPS**

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## **Teaching Tip 10: Monitoring**

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### *How:*

1. While the students are doing an activity you walk slowly round the classroom and listen to their conversations.
2. You can sit down too, if there are enough chairs, but try to sit in the background a bit or the students will direct their conversation to you.
3. Look at one pair whilst actually listening to a different pair nearby. Correct the pair nearby (which will probably make them jump because they thought you were listening to the pair you were looking at) just to keep everyone on their toes - they never know when you're listening to them so they can't ever switch off or revert to their mother-tongue.
4. Be ready to massage any flagging conversations back into life, to stop students monopolising conversations, to stop students falling out with each other and to offer encouragement and praise where appropriate. Listen and supervise.
5. Take a piece of paper and a pen with you on your travels round the classroom so that you can jot down any howlers (which can then be dealt with at the end - see TT11 for further explanation).

### *Why:*

1. If you spend your life in the classroom sitting down, this is your chance to stop numb-bum syndrome - get up and wander round. If you spend your life in the classroom on your feet, this is your chance to put your feet up (not literally, maybe, though I did when I was pregnant!) - sit down to listen to the students.
2. Monitoring gives you the opportunity to hear how the students are coping with the activity and to make notes about pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar points that are causing difficulty. I see the role as one of listener/supervisor/facilitator/encourager - not as one of error corrector.

### *Extra info:*

Although it's a good idea to indicate that you're actually listening to the students (even to the point of feigning interest in what they are saying) I wouldn't suggest crouching down to table height in order to listen to the students - it looks silly.

Apparently, (according to books on body language) tipping your head to one side gives the impression that you are listening avidly to someone so if you were thinking of switching off and not listening to your students at all (..me..??..never!!), tip your head to one side first and they'll be none the wiser!

I generally don't correct mistakes very much when I'm monitoring - I jot them down and do a bit of error correction later because if I get caught up correcting one student's mistakes during the activity I can't monitor the other students properly and by the time I get back to monitoring I find that everyone has reverted happily to their mother tongue.

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