

TEACHING TIPS

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Teaching Tip 18: Pacing

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How:

1. Change the pace of the lesson by breaking things up a bit. Instead of simply doing one activity straight after another, allow a little time for something different (pronunciation work, for example - see TT4 for further information).
2. You can also change the pace during a lesson by allowing time for a brainstorming session (see TT15 for further explanation).
3. Another way to liven up the pace is to put a time limit on some activities - 'You have 2 minutes for this, so get going!' Or introducing an element of competition - put the class into small groups and tell them that these are teams and the first team to finish this activity is the winner. (Prize = no homework, or something like that). Maybe the activities which involve matching words with pictures would be a good one for this).
4. Use other material during the lesson - your coursebook etc.
5. Wake people up by giving them a 2 minute test on last week's vocabulary.
6. Allow silence at appropriate times during the lesson - while students are reading the questions or during speaking activities when students are formulating a response (thinking of something to say). Silence in the classroom can be a bit unnerving at first but it doesn't mean you're not doing your job - students need time to absorb information and time to think. We all do.

Why:

1. The lesson will become rather monotonous if it's just a case of 'Do Activity 1, then do Activity 2, then (lo and behold) do Activity 3'!
2. The lesson will become even more monotonous if the students spend all lesson with the same partner - change the partners over, make small groups instead, or (especially in a brainstorming session) have the group brainstorming directly to you.

Extra info:

Exercises may be numbered 1, 2, 3 etc but that doesn't mean you have to do them in that order or feedback (see TT8) in that order. In the discussion activities I often tell students to read all the questions, select the 3 that interest them most and talk about them. When feeding back from another exercise I may ask for the answer to number 5 then number 2 then number 4 - keeps the students on their toes!

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