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## Teachers' Corner

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September 2007

Hi YANA,

*I want to teach in the target language (TL) as much as possible, but with level one students it is difficult. I will start doing it and we'll see how it goes. Do you have any ideas for me?*

#### Obvious things from day one for the teacher:

1. Greet in TL – as they come into the classroom and when you see them in the hall
2. Act out what you are saying
3. Repeat things several times, trying at first to use the same words, later using a variety of words to get the idea across.
4. Make use of cognates! They're a give for everybody.
5. Use a lot of pictures – start with magazine ads or clip art. (I had a huge box of pictures that I put on construction paper and used for all kinds of stimuli at all levels. Enlist the help of your students and you'll cover a lot more ground more quickly. Some pictures need to be simple if they are going to be used for vocabulary cues; others need to be complex so they can be used for story telling.)
6. Don't give in!

#### Maybe not so obvious things for the teacher:

1. Answer all questions in TL, gradually reducing your understanding of English
2. Give out all assignments in TL (be sure they're posted where students can see them so there is no confusion)
3. Keep the book closed so their memory has to work and whatever they are saying/hearing is more like real language than sounds from a page.
4. Teach vocabulary in context – not just English-TL equivalents. Use words in sentences almost right away.
5. Warm-ups should be interactive rather than filling in the blank or writing a list. (Use 5 of the following words in a conversation with another student.)
6. Be sure they leave your classroom everyday with new conversational skills (new and relevant vocabulary, ways to ask questions, ways to circumlocute, etc.)
7. Part of their homework is to practice the skills out loud, either with another student, or by self-recording and listening to themselves.
8. Don't give in!

#### Obvious things from day one for the student:

1. Repetition of whatever the teacher asks
2. Greet in TL
3. Ask questions in TL (I put up a bulletin board with all of the TL interrogatives so the word bank is available to them. One year my theme was "What on earth is she asking?" and all of the interrogatives were written on cloud shapes.)
4. Listen carefully to songs, tv programs, the radio, etc. There's so much out there on YouTube, podcasts, etc that they really don't have much of an excuse these days.
5. Keep the book closed in class unless the teacher asks you to open it.
6. Review every day
7. Learn vocabulary in context – not just a list of words and meanings. Conversation is not a list of words, rather vocabulary has meaning and context to be conversation.
8. Don't give up!

#### With your colleagues

1. Try to get your colleagues to talk to you in TL, especially if they stop by your room for something during class, or when you are standing in the hall between classes. Anywhere where students will hear you and become aware that it really is a language of communication.
2. Don't give in!

#### "Games" to play SCAN IN OCA GAME – LOOK FOR OTHER GAME BOARDS?

1. On select days, do not use the words Sí and No
2. On select days, let the students ask you questions about yourself
3. Towards the end of a lesson, call for ¡Fiesta time! Get them out of their seats and paired off. The topic of the conversation is whatever the vocabulary of the lesson is. As if at a party, where conversations never last very long and everybody changes conversational partners quickly, the partners talk using the vocabulary for a specified length of time (start with 30 seconds, and gradually increase to 3 minutes). Call out ¡Cambien! They change partners and have the same conversation again. Do this at least 3 times, maybe 4. They are surprised that each conversation is unique.
4. Let them talk about whatever they wish with a friend in the class. Tell them they must do this for 1 minute. If they're still going strong, let them keep going for another 30 seconds or more. They will be astounded that they went beyond what you asked.
5. Don't give in!

Make boxes with 3 – 4 examples of each type of thing  
Use images, specific examples from various languages

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