

## THE BALANCING ACT OF PLANNING

### Why do tutors change their planned lessons?

*What English to teach is one thing but how they want to learn is another. They are hesitant to make any suggestions to me, which leaves me looking for moments when their eyes glaze over as a sign they are losing interest. Then I try doing things differently. PP*

## OPTIONS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

What would you do?

### Urgent need

*Sometimes an official letter has to be dealt with immediately and I have to phone to sort it out for them. Ideally of course I should teach them how to do it themselves but by that time there would be a crisis. Anyway, many of them are very specific and once off.*

1. Teach the learner how to do the task.

For

Against

2. Do the task for the student and then return to the lesson

For

Against

3. Suggest this is something another family member could do

For

Against

## **Homework wasn't done**

*My lesson openings are usually based on home work I have set from the week before. Lately it seems as if she just doesn't do the homework. Sometimes she has a reason, sometimes not. It means the whole flow of the lesson is spoiled.*

### 1. Ignore the problem and do something else

For

Against

### 2. Ask why not?

For

Against

### 3. Plan for alternatives to the homework

## **The learner is tired/ distracted/ unmotivated**

*Some days I wonder whether the learner really is interested in our lessons. He seemed very keen at the start, but lately he seems to be very passive.*

## **TOWARDS LEARNER AUTONOMY**

### **Why are some learners passive?**

#### **What motivates learners?**

(Adapted from Petty, 2004 43 ff)

*How do these aspects of motivation work out for the learner you are working with?*

1. What I am learning is useful to me.

*How do you find out what is useful to your student?*

Consider

Accompanying beginner students to places like the library.

2. I find I am usually successful in my English lessons and that success increases my self-esteem.

*How can your lessons include feelings of success, even for beginner learners?*

Consider

The amount of new material v time spent practising

Same language/ different context

Making instructions clear (use examples)

Praise... realistic / genuine.

3. The acceptance of other people (tutor, workmates, friends) in my efforts to use English is important to me.

*Apart from family, who is important in the learner's life?*

4. The lessons and the activities are fun and interesting.

*What activities are most interesting to particular learners? Exchange examples of successes and failures.*

## **Tutor chooses resources that promote independence**

(Reinders and Lewis, 2008)

The following items promote learner autonomy. Who would be helped by each of these items?

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Helps learner</b>	<b>Helps tutor</b>	<b>Helps both</b>
Describes student level			
An index			
A 'map' of the content			
Glossary			
Chapter previews or summaries			
Examples of tasks			
Answers to exercises			
Objectives			
Ideas for goal-setting			

## Learner evaluates own progress

How can learners self-evaluate? (Ref: Petty, 2004: 352-3)

- Open-ended questions

e.g. What do you find most difficult about using English outside class?

What are your strengths in studying English?

What problems have you overcome since we started our lessons?

- Checklist or questionnaire

e.g. Design one based on the initial needs analysis

## Learner takes increasing responsibility for learning

Snow (2007) sets out ideas for making learners take more responsibility for their vocabulary learning.

### Beginners

**Tutor** Chooses materials with relevant words

**Learner** Brings some words from everyday life

*To discuss: Brainstorm examples of places/ contexts where learners you know might meet new words orally or in writing.*

### Intermediate

**Tutor** Explains difference between active and passive 4 vocabulary

**Learner** Decides which words they need to understand/ use

*To discuss: Think of examples of words which learners might need to understand but not use themselves.*

**Tutor** Teaches some strategies for vocabulary learning

**Learner** Uses some strategies between lessons

*[See books on teaching strategies to language learners]*

### Advanced

**Tutor** Introduces ideas for

- Working out word meanings
- Memorising words and meanings
- Learning about word usage and 'layers of meaning'.
- Sources 'real' English materials rather than text books

**Learner** Makes decisions about between-class learning.

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