

Integrating Interactive Activities into Your Lesson Plans

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Interactive teaching maximizes the level of interaction during the class. It uses a variety of different interaction patterns, including both teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction, but tries to increase student talking time by having students talk to each other, sometimes even simultaneously. When integrating new activities into your class for the first time, it is important to think about how they fit in with the rest of your teaching and what challenges might arise when you introduce a new activity, so you can be prepared for success.

Benefits of Interactive Teaching

- *Student Talking Time:* Student interaction means more time to practice speaking.
- *Active Participation:* All students are engaged actively during the lesson.
- *Limited Resources:* Pair and group activities require fewer copies of your materials.
- *Motivation and Fun:* Students enjoy doing activities and talking to their classmates.

Student Interaction Patterns

- *Pairs:* 2 students. Students work with the student next to them.
- *Small Groups:* 3-10 students. Students make groups or assigned to groups by the teacher.
- *Teams:* 1/2 to 1/4 of the class. Sections of the class work together, often by area.
- *Whole Class:* All students. The whole class participates at the same time.

Four Ways to Integrate Interactive Activities into Your Lessons

- *Warm up:* Energize students at the beginning of class with a short activity.
- *Review:* Check that students remember material that they've learned previously.
- *Practice:* Give students a chance to consolidate their learning.
- *Reward:* Motivate students to behave well by playing a game at the end of class.

Challenges and Solutions for Interactive Activities

- *Students are too noisy:* Demonstrate the volume you want them to use.
- *Students use French, not English:* Assign a student to monitor the group's language.
- *Students are chatting:* Set a time limit for the activity, so students must work quickly.
- *Some students participate a lot and others don't:* Require each student to participate once.
- *Students don't understand the instructions:* Demonstrate the activity step by step.

Strategies for Increasing Student Interaction

- *Create a friendly environment:* Encourage participation and minimize error correction.
- *Plan for new activities:* Practice explaining/demonstrating the instructions before class.
- *Create routines:* Repeat your favorite activities so your students get comfortable with them.

Planning Checklist

1. Objective (*What do students need to be able to do?*)
2. Activity (*Which activity will help them reach the objective?*)
3. Type of Interaction (*How will students interact with each other?*)
4. Materials (*What materials do you need? Do you need to prepare anything in advance?*)
5. Timing (*How long will the activity take? Remember to include time for the instructions.*)
6. Part of Lesson (*When during the lesson will you use it? Beginning, middle or end?*)
7. Instructions (*How will you explain the instructions? Will you need to demonstrate?*)
8. Reflection (*How will you tell if the activity was successful?*)

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Ball Game (Whole Class)

1. Ask all students to put their hands up, so they are ready to catch a ball.
2. Ask a question and throw the ball to a student. The student answers the question.
3. The student asks the question and throws the ball to a different student, who answers.

Back to the Board (Whole Class)

1. One student sits at the front of the room with their back to the board. Write a vocabulary word on the board behind them. Tell them the category or topic the word is from.
2. The rest of the class tries to describe the word so that the student at the front can guess but they cannot say the word on the board.
3. The student at the front can also ask yes/no questions until they are able to figure out the word on the board.

Target Game (Teams)

1. Draw three concentric circles on the board. Label them with +, - and ?.
2. Divide the students into two teams. Give a student from one team the ball and ask them to throw it at the target. Ask them to make a sentence according to the area the ball hits (+ : positive, - :negative, ? :question). If it hits outside of the target, the teachers chooses the sentence type for the student. If the sentence is correct, their team gets a point.

Odd One Out (Small Groups)

1. Each member of the group writes three vocabulary words on a piece of paper, two of which that fit together and one that is different.
2. One student shows their group members the three words they wrote. The group members try to choose which word is the different one. Higher level students can also explain why.
3. Continue until each group member has shared their list of three words.

One Picture, Many Sentences (Pairs)

1. Have students divide a paper into two halves. At the top of the paper, each student draws a picture. Below the picture, the student writes a sentence about their picture.
2. Students exchange papers with their partners and read the sentence. If there are any errors, they revise the sentence to correct the errors. If there are not any errors, they add new information to the sentence.
3. The students exchange papers again and repeat step 2 until they have a set number of sentences, or until the time is finished.

Think, Pair, Share (Pairs and Whole Group)

1. Ask students a question, and give them one minute to think silently about their answer.
2. Give students one or two minutes to share their answers with a partner.
3. Have some students share their and their partner's answers with the group.