**Dictation Revival**

*Ten Good reasons for Dictation*

* The Ss are active during the exercise (actively producing language , good for kinesthetic learners)
* The Ss are active after the exercise (Ss self-correct or do collaborative correction, T could provide text on OHT for reference)
* Dictation leads to oral communicative activities / other skills (could be used as a lead-in for other activities)
* Dictation fosters unconscious thinking (the higher the level of Ss, the less their mind is occupied with the dictation, and is freed up to be able to think of other things. Their thoughts are triggered by the dictation and ideas can be brewing)
* Dictation copes with mixed-ability groups (the T gives a dictation to the stronger, more advanced Ss. She gives the weaker Ss the text with about 15-20 words left out. After the dictation, the stronger Ss explain the text to the weaker ones, and check the words they inserted. The number of gaps can vary according to level)
* Dictation deals with large groups
* Dictation will often calm groups
* Dictation is safe for the non-native speakers (can be prepared fully in advance, even to the extent that a T can look up the pronunciation of certain words)
* For English, it is a technically useful exercise (decoding the sounds of English and recoding them into writing is a major learning task. It helps Ss as English is not phonetic and Ss get used to spelling vs. pronunciation
* Dictation develops listening (therefore we should chunk our language naturally, and not create artificial pauses where they would not naturally occur, we also keep to weak forms as in normal speech)
* Dictation gives access to interesting text (Use dictation strategies & activities to exploit this text & employ techniques which will increase or decrease the difficulty of the text to match the needs and abilities of the Ss).

Sandra Attard-Montalto/2009 (adapted from Dictation – Davis & Rinvolucri CUP)

1. **The teacher is a tape recorder**

Ask Ss what buttons you can find on a cassette player. Write on the board:

PLAY STOP FAST FORWARD REWIND

Tell them you are a tape recorder and when they say the command on the board, you do what they say. They have to write down what the cassette player says. Check that everybody understands by asking “What do you say to make me start?”

Say “OK”, we´re ready to start and wait until someone says PLAY. Read the text at normal speaking pace and keep going until someone shouts (usually in desperation) STOP. At first, it will be chaotic. Be patient and resist the temptation to speak more slowly.

Any text will do, perhaps from the course book. Don´t make it too long.

The following text provides opportunities for Ss to work in pairs afterwards and actually work on corrections. Ss can take turns to dictate the corrected text to other Ss who write in on the board.

*Hi, Ben*

*I hope you are good. I am here in Malta for to learn the English language. I am here since three days. The people is friendly. Our teacher is very sympathetic. She is Maltese and I can understand all that she is telling. I stay in hotel in the near of the sea. It is OK. I m going every day in the school with a bus. Last evening I have to the cinema been. I have not understood nothing. Tomorrow I will Mdina visit. My friends are telling that it is very beautiful. Are you linking culture?*

*I am sure there is much mistakes in that letter. But I am hoping that you are everything understanding. Please, I want that you soon telephone to me. But you have not to phone after 22, because I sleep then.*

*Goodbye for now. You miss me.*

*Hannah*

1. **Pass the buck**

This is another exercise you can use with any text to encourage self-correction. Have the Ss sit in a circle. Each St should have a piece of paper and a pencil and ruber. The teacher dictates the first sentence or phrase of the text.

Ss write the sentence down and pass their paper to the St to their right. They underline any mistakes they think they can see in the first sentence on the sheet they receive. They do not correct them.

Dictate the second sentence, Ss pass on their paper to their right. This time Ss underline any mistakes in the second sentence and correct any mistakes in the first sentence.

After giving the Ss enough time to think, dictate the third sentence. Make it clear that each time the Ss finish taking down a sentence, they should pass the paper on and underline mistakes in the last sentence and correct the last but one sentence.

Finally, the Ss work together to talk about correction. The teacher then reads the correct sentences and comments. Because the text written by each St is distributed over many sheets of paper, this exercise is cooperative and non-judgemental.

At the end, Ss put the paragraphs in the correct order and use correct conjunctions to connect the sentences.

1. **Storytelling Activity:**

Dictate the following verbs in the order shown below to the students:

was tried

went smelled

bought looked for

cheated jumped

fell couldn´t manage

hurt cried out

shouted held

ran away felt

thought had

Once you have finished dictating the words to the students, ask them to check in pairs if they have the right words. Next, in groups of two or three, ask them to compose a story. Explain that there are some rules they have to follow when composing their story:

1. They have to use all the verbs in order and in the past as shown above
2. They have to form one single story and can only use the verbs given

Allow 15 to 20 minutes for Ss to come up with their stories. After, take feedback from the groups.

This activity encourages Ss to use only what is given them and to work as a team to form a story.

Sandra Attard- Montalto

[www.etimalta.com](http://www.etimalta.com)

**SONGS AND MUSIC & THEIR LEARNING POTENTIAL**

***Ways to use Songs in Class***

* *For pronunciation and spelling: use a gap-fill activity with the rhyming words blanked out. Or focus on the same sounding words slept differently, e.g. piece, key, meet, please, ….*
* *For vocabulary: e.g. finding synonyms or collocations in the song.*
* *With idioms and colloquial language: e.g. complete a matching activity with the definitions either before or after hearing the song.*
* *For grammar: insert prepositions, or look for comparatives and superlatives, or other grammatical structures.*
* *As narrative: put the lines of the song in order before hearing the song to focus on coherence and cohesion*
* *Listening for details: make some minor changes to the lyrics and ask Ss to correct them while listening.*
* *For discussion: e.g. songs referring to social problems, crimes or pressures of the modern world can be used as a spring board for a discussion.*
* *For visualization: Ss listen with eyes closed then discuss what they imagined.*
* *With actions: good for kinesthetic learners and for getting everyone moving and energized, e.g. Heads, Shoulders, Knees & Toes.*

Based on ideas by Sandra-Montalto, ETI Malta

1. Chris de Burgh: In the ghetto

Lead-in: Ss work in pairs to list places people live in

After Ss give you the words, ask them to think what the worst area to live in is

Ss get the lyrics cut into stripes, 3 paragraphs, each pair puts one paragraph into the correct order, then listen a check

1. Brian Adams: INSIDE OUT (superlatives)

Lead-in: Ss work in groups and discuss what they need to know about person they know from inside out?

Ss get the gapped lyrics of the song, they should guess the missing words

Useful site:

<http://eltchat.org/wordpress/summary/teaching-english-through-songs-in-the-digital-age-eltchat-summary-12012011/>

**USING VIDEOS AND DVDs**

1. A video clip: You´ve got a mail – Coffee Scene
2. Watch the clip without a sound and guess what the situation is
3. Then watch with the sound
4. Work on character – profile for him
5. Write their conversation
6. A short video: Girls like you
7. Listen to sound and write down words for sounds you hear
8. Watch the parts of the clip and guess what happened

Follow-up activity: - ending of the story, - T –F sentences, - mind map, - second conditional

1. Display a picture
2. Brainstorm what Ss know about it
3. Work in groups: Ss write questions to find out more info about it
4. Show them the video to see whether it gives them answers for all their questions
5. If not, they can find the answers for HW of have a class debate

**COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRUCTURES**

Cooperative learning and English language learners go together. Group activities can provide English language learners with opportunities to learn from their peers and become more confident in their abilities to learn on their own.

Dr. Spencer Kagan has developed over 100 structures, but you don't need to learn them all to use cooperative learning effectively. Most teachers have 10 or 15 favorites that they use on a regular basis. Each cooperative learning structure, or strategy, consists of specific steps.

### Jigsaw

Split your ELL students into groups, with each group containing members of various levels and abilities. Have members of each group who are of the same level meet together separately to work on part of the group’s task. When they are finished working separately, team members go back to their groups and work together to put all of their respective pieces together into one cohesive group project.

**The Numbered Heads Together** is another cooperative learning structure that is used for the purposes of intergroup cooperation and individual accountability. Using this structure, students in each home group count off from 1-4 and when a question is posed for the group to answer, only one member in the group will answer and he/she will not know ahead of time that he/she will be picked by the teacher. Therefore, the group will have to make sure that every member in the group knows the material well.

**Step 1 - Starting from Home**

First, organize your class into heterogeneous groups of four. These groups are your "home groups". Each group contains a child from each of the four levels identified by SOLOM or whatever identification tools you've used. Students need to understand that ultimately they are responsible to and dependent upon their home groups for their learning.

**Step 2 - Becoming Experts**

After the home groups are established, you separate the students into "expert groups" whose composition is homogeneous by student ability. Students physically leave their home groups and join their expert groups to complete tasks that will give them expertise. Each expert group has its own tasks that are designed with that group's ability in mind. As soon as the class has settled into its expert groups, work begins on acquiring the expertise students will carry back to their home groups.

**Step 3 - Returning to Home**

Once the expert groups have acquired their expertise, they return to their home groups and teach their skills to the home group. The map-readers track the route of Tulip's trip on the map of the United States, the illustrators help the group to categorize the words by state and understand some action verbs. The project organizers keep the events of the story in their proper sequence, and the journalists teach the group about similes. Perfect!

**Step 4 - Showing What I/We Learned**

But, how do you know that any shared learning has taken place? You give them a quiz, of course! Not a written quiz, but an oral quiz that is given in the Numbered Heads Together structure. In each home group, students count off from 1-4. You, the teacher, ask questions from the quiz you've constructed. Each group then has one minute to confer and make sure that everyone knows, and can explain, the correct answer. When time is up, you randomly choose a number from 1-4 and call on a home group. The student in the home group with that number must answer the question. If the question is answered correctly, the whole group gets one point. (See sample quiz) In this manner, you can assess each student's knowledge of the subject matter you planned without handicapping those students who lack sufficient fluency in writing and reading in English to take a more traditional quiz.

<http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Yahya-Cooperative.html>

### "Writearound"

Divide your class into groups of four (more or less, depending on your class’ size). Give them a story or summary starter one sentence long that each person in each group can add one sentence to. Then each group can [present](http://www.brighthubeducation.com/esl-teaching-tips/81328-ideas-to-keep-your-students-talking/) its stories or summarizations of a lesson to the class.

### Tea Party

Line students up in two lines facing each other. Pose a question to the class, and have students facing each other in the lines discuss the question for a minute or two. Then move on to another question and new partners in the line by having one line move to the right. This activity can also be done in concentric circles, where one circle moves to the right when it is time to get new partners.

#### The Essential 5!


**In pairs, students alternate generating brief oral responses.**

Examples:
• List adjectives to describe the character.
• List inert elements.
• Share steps of the experiment.
• Describe an event from the story.


**In pairs, students share with a partner for a predetermined time while the partner listens. Then partners switch roles.**

Examples:
• What is the key thing that you learned?
• What is one literary technique you plan to use in your writing and how will you use it?


**In teams, students take turns responding orally.**

Examples:
• What makes a good listener?
• List objects that float?
• What clubs or societies are you a member of?
• What is one of your favorite movies?


**Partners take turns, one solving a problem while the other coaches. Then partners switch roles.**

• Useful for any process or procedure with a definite right/wrong.
• Solve multi-step word problems in math.
• Change each decimal into a simplified fraction.

**Students stand up, put their hand up and quickly find a partner with whom to share or discuss.** This structure is perfect for classbuilding, processing and reviewing information, energizing the class, forming random pairs or teams, lesson starts or wraps.



The Structure Function table here illustrates that Kagan Structures fit into multiple categories. For example, we can use **RoundRobin** for Teambuilding, the process by which students get to know, respect, value and like their teammates. RoundRobin is also extremely useful for Knowledgebuilding, students interact with each other to review or memorize stuff to know. As you look across the other functions, you can see that RoundRobin is also great for practicing procedures, processing or presenting information, and for developing and engaging a range of thinking skills. In traditional classrooms, teachers have students work alone. They don't have the chance to learn to work well with others and to manage their own emotions while in interaction with others. At the very same time that students are, for example, reviewing content; Cooperative Learning Structures, i.e. RoundRobin, have the students interact with each other in ways that help them to acquire social skills, character virtues, and emotional intelligence.

<http://www.kaganonline.com/free_articles/research_and_rationale/330/The-Essential-5-A-Starting-Point-for-Kagan-Cooperative-Learning>

**EXPOITING THE INTERNET**

**Sites of General Interest**

Biographies: [www.biography.com](http://www.biography.com)

Films: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

Business: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/business>

Geography: [www.odci](http://www.odci); [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com); [www.factmonster.com](http://www.factmonster.com)

Food: <http://www.cs.yale.edu/homes/hupfer/global/gastronomer.html>; <http://allrecipes.com>

News: <http://bbc.co.uk>; <http://www.cnn.com>

Science: <http://science.howstuffworks.com>

Health: <http://health.howstuffworks.com>

Material/Resources/Ideas/LessonPlans: <http://www.eslcafe.com>; [www.onestopenglish.com](http://www.onestopenglish.com); [www.usingenglish.com/handouts](http://www.usingenglish.com/handouts)

<http://iteslj.org/Lessons/>

<http://www.slideshare.net/MrGram/cooperative-learning-for-esl>

Story in 10 parts to Download: <http://internationl.ouc.bc.ca/takako>

CLIL: [www.languages.dk](http://www.languages.dk)

TREASURE HUNT activity

Ss work in pairs to find the answers to these questions and say which site they found the answers on.

Type the key words to the questions into:

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com) or [www.ask.com](http://www.ask.com) or [www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com)

1. Who was the second man on the moon?
2. Which country uses the Forint, and what is the Euro exchange rate for the Yen today?
3. What is the capital of Somalia?
4. What are the main ingredients of a Cornish pasty?
5. Which is the fastest bird in the world?

Sandra Attard-Montalto, 2008