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Educative Curriculum Materials: A Promising Option for Independent Professional Development

In our conversations with high school teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in rural Nicaragua over the last five years, language instructors have continually stated a need for both teaching materials and professional development. Although we responded with workshops, offers for distance support via email, suggestions of websites for online resources, and the teacher-resource and teacher-education texts we brought with us, these responses were not adequate for the teachers in rural areas. These teachers' situations are often difficult. Classrooms might lack electricity, Internet access, and enough textbooks and chairs for students. Some schools offer classes only once a week due to a lack of community resources. Most importantly, though, the instructors often rise to the occasion to teach English with lower English proficiencies and without formal teacher preparation. Despite their enthusiasm for learning new strategies and approaches, our patchwork efforts failed to assist the teachers very much in this context.

It was a private conversation with a former teacher and teacher-educator (who now helps to shape policy in the Nicaraguan government) that led us in a different—and we think, more sustainable—direction: learning independently through experience, through experimentation, and through practice. This is called *autodidactic learning*. There are ways for teachers to carry out independent professional development—leading themselves to grow in their understanding and practice of teaching. Two of these are action research and individual development plans (Díaz-Maggioli 2003). However, to use these models, teachers need connections with teaching colleagues, a mentor, and/or a basic understanding of how to do research and carry out reflection. These are resources that rural Nicaraguan teachers—and many teachers in other contexts around the world—rarely have. We looked for an alternative pathway for independent professional development and began to ask the questions: What would professional development look like if trainers and colleagues were less important in the process? What would it look like if teachers were experimenting autonomously on their own with teaching materials that met their needs?

As researchers and teacher trainers, we discovered a concept that was new to us: *Educative Curriculum Materials* (ECMs).

ECMs are teaching materials intentionally designed to guide educators to understand teaching concepts in their own way. Teachers *infer* theory rather than *hear* about it in a workshop. In other words, ECMs are classroom materials that actually help instructors become better teachers by using them. We applied the concept of ECMs to teaching EFL and developed materials in collaboration with Nicaraguan teachers. As we write this article, one year after delivering the first set of materials in three communities in Nicaragua (the materials were laminated to help them last many rainy seasons), we are seeing deep-level changes in teachers' strategies and realizations about language learning.

In this article, we describe ECMs and review key literature related to them. We then suggest a process that others who are supporting teachers in similar circumstances can use to develop and refine classroom materials that provide independent professional development. Finally, we share examples of our own findings in Nicaragua as well as some sample materials.

EDUCATIVE CURRICULUM MATERIALS (ECMs)

ECMs are teaching materials that educate teachers through the teachers' use of them. When authors design curriculum materials, they speak *through* teachers *to* students. However, when authors design ECMs, they speak *directly to* teachers (Remillard 2005). Students benefit from quality-made materials, but it is the teachers who are benefitting the most. ECMs help instructors become better teachers in several ways:

- ECMs assist teachers with noticing and understanding the principles with which the activities are designed.
- Teachers who use ECMs grow in their understanding of the content in the curriculum and why certain methods have been chosen.
- Teachers grow in their ability to predict ideas that students may have during activities and to brainstorm ways to modify the curriculum.

When ECMs are successful, teachers develop their *pedagogical design capacity*, which is their ability to choose strategies and activity types more effectively (Davis and Krajcik 2005).

ECMs ideally balance between saying too much (e.g., being overly prescriptive; providing too much information to teachers) and saying too little and not supporting teachers enough (Davis and Krajcik 2005). When people think about ECMs, it is likely that commercially prepared teachers' guides come to mind. And it is true that ECMs may appear in this form—a separate book that provides explanations of the content, additional examples, activity ideas, and predictions of student questions and challenges.

However, ECMs can also be student materials themselves (Ball and Cohen 1996). ECMs are founded on the idea that materials do not automatically determine the curriculum. Instead, it is when teachers interact with the materials in their own context with their students that the curriculum comes alive—the *enacted curriculum* (Remillard 2005). This interaction with the materials creates the opportunity to learn. The design of materials can greatly affect the ways teachers interact with them and the choices teachers make with content and methods. This suggests that one way to shape curriculum is to carefully design materials in principled ways that support teachers with decisions about content and the use of sound pedagogy.

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ECMs are not a new concept. For the past two decades, they have been a popular source of professional development for teachers in the United States' K–12 (kindergarten through 12th grade) mathematics and sciences. As content and preferred pedagogies have changed, ECMs have helped math and science teachers develop. However, outside these disciplines, ECMs are relatively unknown. Studies in math and science education show that some teachers improve their teaching of content and use of pedagogy when using ECMs (Cervetti, Kulikowich, and Bravo 2015; Collopy 2003). In fact, those teachers with the least knowledge of methods make the greatest gains (Hill and Charalambous 2012). It has also been found that ECMs can successfully guide science teachers to support English language learners (Cervetti, Kulikowich, and Bravo 2015). Since ECMs appear to be successful in the disciplines of science and math (especially with teachers who have little knowledge of methods) and allow teachers to professionally develop independently, it seems logical to apply the concept of ECMs to the teaching of EFL.

What should we consider as we design materials? Remillard's (2005) theoretical framework of what affects the success of ECMs provides some guidance. When designing ECMs, according to Remillard (2005), we should carefully consider the following:

1. How we express concepts through words or graphics (e.g., diagrams)
2. Whether we include actual objects with the ECMs, or how we represent objects that we recommend be used with the materials
3. What we include for the teacher to use (e.g., student activities)
4. How activities are explained and represented
5. What type of voice (e.g., authoritative) the author has
6. What the appearance or look of the materials is (e.g., whether they include brightly colored photographs)

All of these can have an effect on teachers' experiences with the materials.

Since it is not the materials themselves but rather teachers interacting with the materials that causes professional development, we also need to consider the characteristics of teachers when we design materials for them (Remillard 2005). Which characteristics should we consider when designing materials? According to Remillard's (2005) framework, the following are important:

- We should know how much content knowledge teachers have as well as how much knowledge and comfort they have with different methods.
- Related to methods, we should know whether teachers have the ability to recognize which strategies work best at times—the teachers' pedagogical design capacity.
- It is important to know teachers' perceptions of the curriculum and of their students.
- At a more personal level, teachers' beliefs, goals, accumulated experiences, and tolerance for taking risks with new ideas will all affect how they respond to materials.
- We should also get a sense of teachers' professional identities as well as their personal identities.

It is not the materials themselves but rather teachers interacting with the materials that causes professional development.

Any and all of these can influence what teachers need from the materials and how they respond to them (Remillard 2005).

Finally, another aid in applying ECMs to the teaching of EFL is the proposed process of Davis et al. (2014). Based on this research group's own successful procedure, the authors recommend the following steps:

Step 1. Analyze the current learning materials to locate gaps in the curriculum that could be supported with content and methods.

Step 2. Create an observation protocol (a checklist of what you will look for while observing teaching) and interview questions for teachers based on the gaps found in Step 1.

Step 3. Carry out observations and interviews with teachers using the materials created in Step 2.

Step 4. Compare the findings against student learning.

According to Davis et al. (2014), carrying out these steps will ensure more principled design of ECMs.

In the next section, we suggest a process based on Davis et al. (2014) for those applying ECMs to the teaching of EFL. We include examples of our own findings as well as sample materials.

A PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING ECMs FOR EFL

Based on our own experiences in Nicaragua, Remillard's (2005) framework from mathematics teaching, and Davis et al.'s (2014) steps for developing ECMs for science teaching, we suggest the following five steps for those developing materials to support the professional development of EFL teachers in resource-poor situations.

Step 1. Analyze the current teaching materials for gaps

In this first step, read through any current materials, such as textbooks, that teachers are required to use or choose to use in their teaching of EFL. As you do this, ask yourself the following questions:

- In what ways do these materials support EFL teachers?
- What do these materials provide to EFL teachers?
- What (if anything) is missing from the materials that could support effective language teaching?
- Imagine yourself teaching with the materials. If you did not supplement them in any way, which aspects of language learning would be well supported? Which aspects of language learning would not be supported?
- If you were to teach with the materials, would you carry out the activities differently than the directions instruct you to? If so, how?
- If you were to supplement the materials, what would you imagine yourself adding to them?

Because no materials are perfect, it is likely that you will gather ideas about how the materials could be supplemented or improved to support EFL teachers in your particular context. In this first step, you are gathering your initial pieces of information about what

the ECMs you will create could add to the learning environment. What's more, you are developing ideas about the ways that you could provide professional development for the teachers using the materials.

In our exploration of the national textbook used by English teachers in Nicaragua, we noticed that it provided teachers and students with short reading passages on the same topic and comprehension questions following each reading. For example, in one chapter, the textbook included many short readings about different families. The directions often told students to work together with a partner to answer the reading-comprehension questions. If we were to teach with the textbook without changing the directions in any way, all students would have exactly the same information for the activities. As a result, when partners work together, both partners would have a copy of the same reading and the same set of questions. There would be no real reason for them to communicate with each other because there would be no information they would really need to share. Thus, negotiation of meaning (Pica and Doughty 1985) would be unlikely to occur.

We realized that if we were teaching with the textbook, we might change the directions to include a jigsaw activity—students are put into groups (often groups of four), and each group gets part of the information that all students need. After students in their "expert groups" go over the information they have to make sure that each member understands it, students are placed in jigsaw groups, in which one person from each of the expert groups is present. Students then use English to share their information with their new groups in order to carry out a task or answer questions. "Try This: Jigsaw Vocabulary" (Hanna 2016) is a good example of this kind of activity.

Another option is an information-gap activity: give partners different information, such as different pictures, and ask them to decide how the images differ. The lack of opportunity for negotiation of meaning was a significant deficiency in the Nicaraguan textbook; we felt that jigsaw or information-gap activities could improve learning, as students had to communicate in English to solve a problem or complete a task.

Step 2. Observe teaching in action

Use what you found in your analysis of the current teaching materials in Step 1 to decide what you will look for as you observe EFL classes. As you create an observation protocol—the list of items that you will watch for when you observe teaching—ask yourself the following questions:

- What strengths in language teaching do I expect to see, based on the materials I analyzed in Step 1?
- What gaps in language teaching do I expect to see, based on the materials?
- Do teachers use elements of good language teaching that are not included in the teaching materials? If so, what might these look like?
- If teachers do not supplement gaps in the learning materials, are there natural opportunities during the class to do so?

Once you establish what you will be watching for as you observe, try to see as many classes and as many teachers in action as you can. In this way, you can get a general understanding of the best ways to support teachers with professional development to make their EFL teaching even more effective.

As we carried out observations of teaching in rural EFL classrooms in Nicaragua, we were looking for ways that teachers might include opportunities for students to purposefully communicate with one another in English. Since the national textbook did not naturally lead to authentic and necessary reasons for students to communicate, we looked for the following as we observed teaching:

- Are there opportunities for student–student interaction in English during class? If so, do students have real reasons to communicate with one another in English?

Like students, teachers are more likely to engage in learning successfully when they are motivated to do so.

- Are students given task-based activities (activities that really accomplish something or solve a problem) rather than just comprehension questions to carry out together?

- Do students have an opportunity to create their own responses in English rather than repeat scripted responses?

We were operating under the assumptions that for students to learn language, interaction is necessary (Long 1981), and that students need opportunities to try out language in the form that makes sense to them at their own interlanguage stage (Selinker 1972). What we saw in our observations was that teachers called on students, creating teacher–student interaction opportunities, but there was little student–student interaction. When it did occur, it was focused on reciting material that all students had. We did not observe task-based activities or opportunities for students to create their own responses in English. These were the most significant gaps we noticed in our observations.

Step 3. Interview teachers to find out what their desires are for their teaching and how they prefer to learn

This step is important because it focuses on what teachers want to learn more about—and how the learning can happen. For example, teachers may want to know more about the content of EFL—how English works, what words mean, what the grammar rules are, how politeness works, etc.; pedagogy—the options we have for strategies and methods for teaching language; and pedagogical design capacity (Davis and Krajcik 2005)—the ability, as mentioned above, to recognize which strategies and activity types might work best for learning goals. Teachers will ideally share their learning preferences with you as well (e.g., learning through a lecture).

As you plan your interviews, we suggest that you include questions like the following:

- What do you feel confident about in your English teaching?

- What do you wish you felt more confident about?

- What works well in your teaching?

- What could work better?

- If your teaching of English could improve, in what ways might it change?

- If you could learn more about any aspect of teaching English, what would you choose to learn about?

- When you think about engaging your students in learning, what questions come to mind?

- How do you prefer to learn about teaching?

The interviews should provide information about what the teachers would most like to receive regarding professional development. Like students, teachers are more likely to engage in learning successfully when they are motivated to do so. Choosing professional-development topics that match up with teachers' desires is an economical pathway to bringing about change.

For our ECM project, we held group discussions and individual interviews with teachers in Nicaragua; we also met with teachers during a session at a national NicaTESOL conference. The teachers expressed feeling a lack of confidence in their pedagogical design capacity; they also said that they wanted to feel confident enough to be able to conduct more of their

class using English. In addition, teachers commonly expressed a shared goal to teach more dynamically; in other words, teachers stated that they wanted to find ways to get students more engaged and to be more active in class. We also discovered that many teachers preferred to learn about teaching through models and examples. They preferred this inductive learning, with few words, over getting explanations of theory.

From these findings, we realized that using a lot of examples of jigsaw and information-gap activities and task-based student–student interaction would help the teachers create the dynamic learning they sought. Using many examples could also help them expand their tool kit of strategies and activity types and would provide professional development in an inductive way. In addition, if we included directions for the activities in simple English, teachers would feel more confident giving directions in English. The information we gathered from the teachers helped us make better sense of what we had found in both the materials analysis and the classroom observations.

Step 4. Create and supply the materials

By the time you reach this step, you should have a clear idea of the professional-development goals related to your ECMs. In other words, you should know what the *educative* part for teachers will be. Now you are ready to decide which form the materials will take and how teachers will access them. It could be a teacher's handbook that provides teaching suggestions, explanations about English, and activity ideas to supplement the textbook. It could be a companion website that teachers can freely use if they have Internet access. It could be kits of realia or game sets. The options should match the real needs and contexts of the teachers for whom you are designing the ECMs. When you are considering the form that the ECMs should take, we suggest reflecting on the following questions:

- Do both teachers and students need access to the ECMs to meet the professional-development goals?
- Do teachers have regular and easy access to the Internet?
- Do teachers have a place to store materials at school?
- Are there weather issues that should be considered for storing or transporting materials?
- How should information be shared with teachers to meet their desires and learning preferences?
- How can the ECMs supplement the current teaching materials?

After carrying out this reflective process, you should know the form that the ECMs could take to meet the professional-development goals and learning preferences of teachers. In addition, you should have a clear sense of how the ECMs can be a companion to the current teaching materials and how to best make the materials available to teachers.

In considering the contexts of teachers in rural Nicaragua, we decided to create clear activity types that teachers could easily identify and apply to other topics (jigsaws, giving-directions activities, information gaps, back-to-screen activities, find-someone-who activities, etc.). We chose to match the activities to the topics in the curriculum so that the activities were a natural part of the learning units. To support more teacher talk in English, we created clear, simple directions that teachers could give to their students for each activity.

Since we wanted to demystify the creation of materials and activities, and since we also wanted to make that process more accessible, we decided to hand-draw many of the materials rather than use professional-looking drawings. Most rural teachers do not have access to the Internet or printing, so we chose to provide physical materials rather than electronic access to them. Also, most teachers do not have a safe place to store materials at school, so they carry the materials to and

from home every day. For this reason, we laminated each set of materials and provided water-resistant bags that teachers could use to transport the materials during rainy seasons. We also included a large number of small-tipped dry-erase markers and pieces of cloth so that students could mark on the materials and then erase the marks at the end of class. As we delivered the materials, we hoped that they would last many years at each school.

Here, we include three examples of initial ECMs that we created through this process. We drew all images ourselves for the ECMs. Figure 1 shows a picture-based information-gap activity that complements a unit in the seventh-grade curriculum in which students learn the names of items found in classrooms.

Activity 1: Find the Differences in Classrooms

Your classroom is different from your partner's. Find the differences by asking each other questions in English.

Picture A

Picture B

Figure 1. Find the Differences in Classrooms

In this activity, students are paired with someone who can see a classroom picture that is different from their own. We drew the images and then created a two-sided lamination showing Picture A on one side and Picture B on the other; the idea is to prevent partners from seeing each other's picture. The directions are simple and serve as a model of teacher talk.

Figure 2 shows an activity that we created for the eighth-grade curriculum in which students learn to talk about food in English. This is a giving-directions drawing activity in which the laminated materials are printed on one side only. Both students will have a copy of the image of the empty plate. One student will use a dry-erase marker to draw kinds of food on the plate without showing his or her partner. Then that student will give directions in English, describing which kinds of foods the partner should draw in order to make the two plates match. When the partners are done giving and getting

Activity 2: What Is on Your Plate?

Decide who will go first in this activity—you or your partner. When it is your turn, fill your plate below with the kinds of food that you like by drawing them. Do not show your partner what you are drawing. When you are done drawing, use English to describe the food on your plate to your partner. Your partner will draw the same kinds of food on his or her plate. After you are done describing the food, show your plate to your partner. Did you draw the same kinds of food?

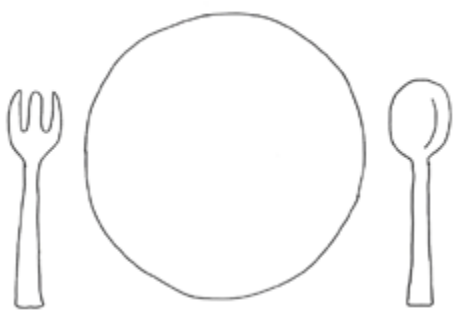

Figure 2. What Is on Your Plate?

directions, they compare the two plates to see if they are the same. In this way, students get natural feedback on whether they have correctly learned the names of foods in English. As with the activity based on the images in Figure 1, the directions at the top of the activity serve as a model of teacher talk as well.

Figure 3 depicts the third example of an ECM we created. This ECM corresponds with a unit in the seventh-grade curriculum in which students learn to talk about and understand time in English. The activity is a back-to-screen activity; that is, some students will be able to see the board, and others will not. Those who cannot see the board must rely on a partner to tell them what he or she sees. The activity begins when a student volunteer draws hands on a clockface on the board. The other students are in pairs, with one student facing the board and the other student with his or her back to the board ("back to screen"). The students who can see the board tell their partners what time the clock shows. Each partner draws a clock

Activity 3: What Time Is It?

This is a "back-to-screen" activity. Your students will be divided into two groups. One group will see what is happening, and the other group will *not* see what is happening. Those who can see what is happening must use English to describe what they see to their partners.

1. Draw a clockface  on the board.
2. Form pairs. Have the students in the first row form partners with the students immediately behind them. The third row forms partners with the fourth row, and so on. The arrangement of partners will look like this in a class of 24 students:

A	B	C	D	E	F
A	B	C	D	E	F
G	H	I	J	K	L
G	H	I	J	K	L

3. Have the first row of students turn their backs to the front of the classroom. They should face their partners behind them. The third row of students will turn their backs to the front of the classroom, too. Repeat so that each pair of students has one student facing the back of the classroom and one facing the front.
4. The students who are facing the back of the classroom need paper and a pencil, which they will use to draw clocks.
5. Choose one student to come to the front of the room and draw the two hands on the clock, showing a time. The student should be silent—not speaking as he or she draws the hands.
6. The students who are facing the board use English to tell their partners the time that was drawn.
7. The students facing the back of the room listen to what their partner tells them and draw a clock that shows this time.
8. The partner facing the front of the room tells them whether the drawing is correct. Students who made the drawings turn and look at the board afterward to see the time that was drawn.
9. Choose a new student to draw on the board. Repeat this activity three times and then have partners switch seats so that the students facing the back of the room can now see the board. Reverse roles and continue.

Figure 3. What Time Is It?

The creation of ECMs is an iterative process, and the materials are most effective when they are revised and improved.

showing this time. The students who can see the board say whether the drawing is correct. Then, the students who cannot see the board turn around, look at the clockface, and tell their partners whether they agree or not. The student volunteer announces the correct answer. The activity is repeated when another volunteer is chosen, and the partners change places so that the other student can now see the board. This activity is in the form of a laminated sheet for the teacher; students do not need any materials besides paper and pencil or pen.

Teachers looking for additional activities such as these can do a Google search for "barrier games." One site offering activities is The Bell Foundation (https://ealresources.bell-foundation.org.uk/teachers/great-ideas-barrier-games). In addition, the following site from Dyan Robson provides free downloadable image backgrounds (such as an ocean floor) that can be used to create activities in which students listen to commands and draw or place cutout images on the backgrounds: http://www.andnextcomesl.com/2016/05/free-printable-ocean-barrier-game.html.

The creation of ECMs is an iterative process, and the materials are most effective when they are revised and improved. We now consider the final step of the process, which should lead to continually improving the materials so that teachers receive optimal professional development from them.

Step 5. Reexamine the ECMs by revisiting classrooms and teachers and considering student learning

To ensure that the materials you have created to support teacher professional development are actually assisting teachers, visit classrooms where the teachers have adopted the materials. Use the observation protocol (the list of things to look for) when you observe the teaching. Note evidence of teacher development around the topics your ECMs have targeted. Also, look for additional ways that the materials can support the teachers.

In addition to observing classes, you can return to interview teachers or have discussions with them about their adoption of the ECMs. We suggest asking questions such as these:

- Has your confidence in teaching English changed? If so, how?
- Have you noticed any changes in your teaching since using the materials? If so, in what ways has your teaching changed?
- Have you noticed any changes in your students' interest in class since using the materials? If so, how has their interest changed?
- What do you like about the materials? What do you dislike?
- How could the materials support you better?
- If anything could be added to the materials, what would you like it to be?

Teachers are likely to have rich new ideas that did not occur to them or to you earlier in the process. Therefore, revisiting teachers who are using the materials is a key step to revising the ECMs and making them the best that they can be.

Along with carrying out observations and reinterviewing teachers, you can gather information about student learning if you are able. Obviously, the reason we care so deeply about teachers improving is that we

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want learning in the classroom to improve. If you have approval to access student data, we suggest asking questions such as the following:

- Have student scores on learning assessments changed since teachers began using the materials? If so, how?
- Have subscores or test items that are most directly related to the focus of the ECMs changed? If so, how?
- Do any formative or informal assessments demonstrate a change in the learning process?
- Have teachers gathered other evidence (e.g., anecdotes) of changes in student English learning that have occurred?
- How do teachers make sense of any changes in assessment outcomes?

Revision of materials is a key step toward creating optimal opportunities for independent professional development for teachers and should not be skipped. Student-learning data can be a great help in this process.

Revisiting teachers was especially helpful to our project in Nicaragua. We have returned several times and have found evidence that the use of ECMs is promising. Teachers said that they teach more dynamically and include more pair work and group work in their lessons when using the materials. In addition, teachers have applied the activity ideas to other topics, indicating that their pedagogical design capacity has grown. Also, some teachers reported growth and confidence in their own English proficiency.

Perhaps most important, our ongoing discussions with teachers led us to identify additional ways that the materials could support them. Teachers did not have an understanding of how they could use formative assessment to note language development through the activities, so with all the learning activities we now include suggestions for assessment as educative features. Teachers also requested a map of the language features that they could highlight in each learning activity. Consequently, to accompany each learning activity, we now include a laminated "Ideas for the Teacher" sheet that includes language features and formative assessment ideas. See the Appendix for additional teacher ideas corresponding to the three activities in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

Although our project is far from complete, and although we are still revising our ECMs, the results so far have led us to share the promising potential of ECMs here.

CONCLUSION

The discovery of the potential for ECMs as a way to provide professional development in EFL was a powerful experience for us. English teachers in rural areas of Nicaragua—like teachers in many other places around the world—rarely, if ever, have the means to access professional-development resources in typical ways. Workshops and conferences in urban areas are worlds away. Teacher-education texts are expensive, and the Internet is difficult or impossible to access. What's more, rural teachers are often disconnected from each other geographically. In this environment, in which the most typical approaches to professional development are not realistic, ECMs hold much promise.

We encourage others to consider whether ECMs may be an effective option in their

contexts. We hope that our proposed process leads others to explore this option, as we believe ECMs offer beneficial opportunities for independent professional development that teachers of EFL can carry out in their own classrooms.

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APPENDIX

Additions to the ECMs: Ideas for the Teacher for Three Activities

Activity 1 addition: Find the Differences in Classrooms

Classroom vocabulary: Reviewing classroom vocabulary before this activity will help. Vocabulary that students might use includes (but is not limited to) *chair*, *desk*, *board*, *door*, *window*, *book*, *notebook*, *pen*, *pencil*, *bookbag*, *bookshelf*, *picture*, *words*, *mountain*, and *boat*.

Grammar note: Students will need to use prepositions in this activity. Review prepositions such as *on* ("on the floor," "on the wall," "on the desk,"), *by* ("by the desk"), and *in* ("in the picture").

Functional language: Students will need to say what they see in their pictures of the classroom. They can use the following structures: *I have (a/an)* _____ *in my classroom. There is (a/an)* _____ *in my classroom*. If a partner needs to ask a question, he or she can use these structures: *Do you have (a/an)* _____ *in your classroom? Is there (a/an)* _____ *in your classroom?*

Assessment: If your goal for the class meeting is that each student will be able to correctly use words for classroom objects, you could create an exit activity requiring each student to speak to you before leaving the room. You could point at an object and ask the student to tell you what it is in English. If your goal for the class meeting is that each student will be able to correctly hear and comprehend classroom object words, you can create a similar exit activity in which you say a classroom object to a student, and that student must correctly point at the object before leaving.

Activity 2 addition: What Is on Your Plate?

Food vocabulary: Reviewing food vocabulary before this activity will help. Vocabulary that students might use includes (but is not limited to) *hamburger*, *rice*, *salad*, *soup*, *bread*, *chicken*, *beef*, *pork*, *fish*, *eggs*, *corn*, and *banana*.

Grammar note: Some kinds of food are count nouns; others are noncount nouns. Help students notice the difference. In the list above, the following are count nouns: *a hamburger*, *an egg*, *a banana*.

Functional language: Students will need to say what they have drawn on their plates. Here are some structures they can use: *I have (a/an)* _____ *on my plate. There is (a/an)* _____ *on my plate*. If a partner needs to ask a question, he or she can use these structures: *Do you have (a/an)* _____ *on your plate? Is there (a/an)* _____ *on your plate?*

Assessment: If your goal for the class meeting is that each student will be able to correctly say and communicate food words, you can move around the room with a

checklist and check off the names of those students who are able to communicate (speak) clearly to their partners. If your goal is that each student will be able to correctly hear and comprehend food words, you can move around the room and check off the names of students who are able to hear the words and immediately correctly draw what they hear. If you want to know about your students' experience with the activity, you can have students do an "exit slip" assessment by having them answer one of the following questions: Which food word was easiest for you to say? Which food word was most difficult for you to say? What food name do you need to know in English?

Activity 3 addition: What Time Is It?

Functional language: There are many ways to name the time in English. Reviewing these options before this activity will help your students feel comfortable and confident with them. For example, "2:45" could be called "two forty-five," "fifteen minutes before three," or "a quarter to three." Similarly, "3:30" could be "three-thirty" or "half past three."

Pronunciation: Students often have trouble hearing the difference between teens (13 and 15, for example) and multiples of ten (30 and 50, for example) in English. Help them hear which part of each word is the loudest. For teens, it is the last part; for tens, it is the first part: thir**TEEN**, **THIR**ty, fif**TEEN**, **FIF**ty.

Assessment: If your goal is that students will be able to hear and comprehend time in English, you could end the activity by reading aloud ten different times in English and having students write down each of the times that you say in English. If your goal is that students will be able to hear the difference between teens and tens, you could put two times on the board, one with teens and one with tens (for example, #1 could be *2:14*, and #2 could be *2:40*). Tell students to hold up one finger in front of their chest if they hear #1 and two fingers if they hear #2. Say one of the times. Keep repeating until everyone is holding up the correct number of fingers. Repeat (for example, #1 could be *4:15*, and #2 could be *4:50*) as often as you feel is necessary.