

Diffusing Discipline

First and Foremost

Always remember: the best attention-getter is the sheer force of your personality, your presence.

The First Encounter

As with any performance (and a part of at least of teaching involves an element of performing), the first few minutes are vital in establishing the right kind of expectations of what is to follow. You must make the most of those first crucial moments. Prepare yourself:

- Get there first, introduce yourself and familiarise yourself with who's sitting where.
- Discover and use the students' names.
- Scan the class to get attention, stop mid-sentence, wait, look steadily.
- Wait for silence and use it effectively: *I'd like you all to look this way and listen carefully.*
- Vary your style through careful use of:
voice tone pitch facial expression posture
use of space proximity
- Set the boundaries. This means telling the students what you expect from them in terms of behaviour.
- Give the lesson a clear form and state it. Make your targets achievable.
- Use we.
- Use repetition and the settling power of positive routine.
- Make sure preparation, including timing, is apparent.
- Give the overall impression: *I am relaxed and confident.*

Teachers who come to class unprepared, who don't learn the students' names, who aren't confident in front of the class, tend to make a bad first impression. They subsequently run the risk of having discipline problems. You don't have to be one of them.

Further Encounters

It is not enough to get attention: we have got to try to maintain attention throughout a lesson or series of lessons. Here are some tips for maintaining discipline as you get to know a class better:

- Remember that a fresh and vigorous approach engages students' attention.

- Plan your movements: give warnings of changes in activities.
- Show how content is related to students' interests, existing knowledge and future concerns.
- Vary activities and learning styles.
- Distribute attention equally. Be flexible enough to value unexpected contributions.
- Keep a roving eye: show that everything is noticed, even if intervention is avoided.
- Keep up the momentum, vary the pace. Don't interrupt the flow of a lesson unnecessarily.
- Be aware of your space: front, back and the sides.

If you can keep students' attention on you, on the task at hand or on each other then there's a greater chance of learning taking place. Your life is also much easier.

Feeling Good, Working Better

If we recognise that self-esteem is important, then it's up to us to try to make students feel good about their work, however imperfect, and by extension, themselves. Here are some suggestions:

- Use *I* rather than *you* statements.
- Help students accomplish something and contribute to the group.
- Make it clear you care for and respect the person.
- Sit or crouch next to, rather than tower over, students – especially children.
- Show you care when someone is absent.

These techniques, which successful teachers use from the very beginning to help build and maintain students' self-esteem, may pre-empt discipline problems before they take shape.

A Rewarding System

A built-in system of rewards provides extrinsic motivation for students to behave better. This is also what is called the 'carrot' approach to discipline in the classroom. For example:

- giving gold stars for children (and why not adults?) for work well done
- ending the lesson with a game or a song
- tossing a sweet to a student who has given a good answer (this also makes the prohibited act of eating in class a rare treat for work well done)
- giving a 'hint' or advice about an upcoming exam
- giving certificates for younger learners, which could be sent home for parents or displayed on the wall
- giving a special class reward, like a trip or excursion somewhere

- showing a video that the students choose, or arranging a trip to the computer room (both, if your school has the facilities)
- making a phone call or writing home (this is usually reserved for bad behaviour in children, but can have an extremely beneficial effect if used for good behaviour).

The advantage of using rewards is that one kind of sanction can involve withholding or postponing them (see Sanctions below). Making motivating group rewards dependant on good group behaviour will also mean that the group itself will punish misbehaviour of its members without you having to do anything.

A Real Reward

Bob Dylan says in one of his songs (Love Minus Zero) *there's no success like failure* and we had often wondered what this puzzling statement could mean. In the context of dealing with difficulties in the classroom, and discipline in particular, we can interpret the statement as one way of stressing the importance of success in learning.

- Take every opportunity to reward students for their efforts. This turns into practical pedagogic terms the old adage that 'nothing succeeds like success'.
- Communicate the feeling of achievement in having completed a task successfully. This is more important than a gold star to stick on the notebook or a sweet from the teacher.
- Encourage students in the things you say to them (*Well done!*) and the way you say them (our voice can be in itself a reward or a reprimand for students).

If we can transform the habit of failure into an opportunity for success, this will have added value in terms of language learnt but, even more, in terms of learning to believe in oneself.

Sanctions

In spite of the previous batch of optimistic strategies, sometimes you may still have to 'punish' in order to instil in the learners a greater sense of responsibility for their own actions. If the rewards are the carrot, sanctions are the 'stick'. They vary, from the minimal (a verbal reprimand or even a mere frown from the teacher) to the draconian (expulsion from the classroom or school, achieved through the use of the institutional authority of the director or head teacher).

Here is a checklist for building reasonable and logical sanctions into your teaching:

- Use eye contact as the first warning. A hard stare can be quite effective. Stare and shift eye contact.
- If behaviour doesn't change, try the discreet approach. Soft, private reprimands are often better than noisy public rebuke.
- Use individual students' names and specify unwanted behaviour. Make corrective statements short (*Stefan, you're chewing gum in class. Please take it out.*).
- Refer to the group's established rules, especially if you've designed them together (see section on Rules and Regulations).
- Establish peace clearly and explicitly before moving on.
- If you send someone out, do it with clear and achievable terms for re-entry, such as *Come back in five minutes or Tell me when you are ready to come back.*
- If you punish someone and it turns out to be unjustified, admit your mistake and give generous apologies.
- Prepare a strong ending to your lesson, to be stuck to after disruption.
- End on a smile whatever sanctions you have been obliged to implement.

It is vital in adopting any strategy with sanctions that we make sure 'the punishment fits the crime'.

Acknowledgement: Thanks to M. McManus for some of the ideas in this section.

Let's Make a Contract

Level	Any
Aim	To encourage a sense of ownership of class rules
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper
Language / Skills	Modal verbs of obligation

Preparation
Draw up your own preferred rules of classroom behaviour.

Procedure
1 Refer to a discipline problem that has come up recently in your class. For example: shouting out, chewing, arriving late for class.

2 Show the students your version of possible class rules, including your own obligations to the class. For example:
 1 Students should not chew in class.
 2 Students must listen to each other respectfully.
 3 Students must do all their homework.
 4 Students should always bring their textbooks and a notebook to write in.
 5 I will start and end classes promptly.
 6 I will return the homework promptly.
 7 I will not threaten students.
 8 I will treat all students fairly.

3 Tell the students that they are going to draw up a contract. Put them into groups to prepare the first draft of their contract. They should list up to ten points.

4 Mix members of the different groups and get them to pool their ideas. They should select up to ten rules that they think are the most important. For example:
 1 We will try to speak in English.
 2 We will not disturb other students.
 3 We will always bring our books, pens and a notebook.
 4 We will listen carefully when the teacher is speaking.
 5 We will be quiet (and listen) when someone else is speaking.
 6 We will do our homework on time.
 7 We will arrive in the classroom a few minutes early.
 8 We will not eat or chew gum in class.
 9 We will leave the room quietly at the end of the class.
 10 We will respect the teacher and the other students.

5 The students can include a section in their contract stating their (reasonable) expectations of the teacher. For example:
 1 The teacher will speak to us respectfully.
 2 The teacher will correct our homework on time.
 3 The teacher will arrive on time.
 4 The teacher will give us advance notice of all tests.
 5 The teacher will remember what we did in the previous lesson.

6 When they have finished, go through the final version. If there are any rules you want to add, do so now. Explain to the class the rules you want to add and why.

7 Take away the contract and type it up (or copy it out so it looks like a 'real' contract).
 8 Display it somewhere visible in the classroom. If you are unable to do this (e.g. you are not allowed to stick paper on the walls), then make copies for all the students in the class and ask them to stick the contract on the first page of their notebook.
 9 If there is a breach of rules in class and you need to call students' attention to it, remind them that this was a rule they agreed on in their contract.

Variation
As part of the contract, you can also negotiate what the sanctions will be for not respecting the rules.
NOTE: This process of drawing up a contract can be done in the students' own language. The contract is also something which can be revisited and updated (see next activity).

Class Contract, Version 2

Level	Any
Aim	To re-evaluate classroom rules with students
Duration	20 minutes
Materials	Your original class contract (see Let's Make a Contract above)
Language / Skills	Modal verbs of obligation

Preparation
Make copies of the original class contract (see Let's Make a Contract on page 44) for every four or five students.

Procedure
1 Two or three months after you've made a class contract, ask the students how many rules they can remember from the original contract and elicit examples from the class.

2 Ask the students to work in small groups. Explain that you would like them to look at the classroom contract and:
 • put a tick next to the rules that are working
 • put a cross next to the rules that aren't working
 • make any suggestions for other rules they think necessary.

3 Give each group a copy of the original class contract and let them get to work.

4 Take advantage of this time to think about your own recommendations. Decide if there are any you would like to change, add or delete.

5 Mix members of the different groups and ask them to compare their ideas.

6 Have a whole-class discussion about what rules they think are working, what rules aren't working and any new rules they'd like to add. Give your own ideas as well during the discussion. Take notes of any changes and go through all the suggested changes at the end of the activity.

7 Take your notes and use them to draft a new contract. This is Contract Version 2. Put it on the wall where the students can see it.

8 You can repeat this activity at different stages of the year (e.g. at the beginning of each term).

NOTES: Class contracts are useful tools but sometimes they get lost, forgotten or simply outdated. It is a useful exercise to revisit them, even if there haven't been any major breaches of the rules. That way you can suggest deleting some rules because they are no longer necessary (i.e. because the students are behaving so well!).

This process of revisiting a contract can be done in the students' own language.

Brainstorm

Level	Any
Aim	To find a solution to a particular discipline problem
Duration	20 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper
Language / Skills	Suggestions: I think we should ... , Why don't we ... ?

Procedure
1 Make a clear statement of a problem. For example: a student has not done any homework for a long time.

2 Initiate a class discussion by asking questions, listening reflectively, probing, clarifying issues, restating the problem and possible solutions.

3 Ask the students to get into groups and brainstorm ideas for solving the problem. Tell them to make notes.

4 In turn, each group suggests their preferred solution(s) to the problem to the rest of the class. For example:
 1 A rule should be agreed on for the minimum number of assignments students are expected to complete each term.
 2 After a certain number of uncompleted assignments, the offender will be asked to sit outside the classroom and complete the latest assignment.
 3 The offender can be 'tutored' by another student to help him or her complete the missing assignments.

5 The class chooses, for example, the top three solutions and makes a plan to implement them, monitor their progress and agree when to review and evaluate the situation.

6 Evaluate the success of the solution after the agreed trial period.

Bad Teacher, Good Teacher

Level	From intermediate onwards
Aim	To raise awareness about varieties of discipline and possible teacher reactions
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	None
Language / Skills	Present simple

Preparation
Make copies of different situations (see below), one for every pair of students.

Situations

- A student's mobile phone rings.
 - Two students are passing notes at the back of the class.
 - A student says something rude to another student.
 - A student says something rude to the teacher.
 - Two minutes before the end of the class, everybody puts their books in their bags. The teacher is still giving class.
 - A student always shouts out the answer to the teacher's questions. He / She doesn't let other students answer.
 - A student is playing with a Cameboy in class.
- (You can add other situations that are pertinent or problematic in your class.)

Procedure

- 1 Ask the students to work in pairs. Name each pair as an A pair or a B pair.
- 2 Give the example of the following situation:
A student is speaking while the teacher is speaking. The teacher wants the student to stop and listen.
- 3 Ask the A pairs to brainstorm what a 'bad' teacher would do in that situation. They can base this on previous experience they've had. They should write down one or two things. Tell the B pairs to brainstorm what a 'good' teacher would do and write in on the paper.
- 4 Distribute the copies of situations below and ask the students to do the same for the situations above.
- 5 When they have finished, put the students in groups: an A pair with a B pair. Ask them to compare their answers.

Surprise Tactics

Level	Any
Aim	To consider the implications of misbehaviour in class
Duration	5 minutes
Materials	Sweets; gum pens
Language / Skills	Varied

Procedure

- 1 Establish which kind of misbehaviour is persistent, as in the activity Act It Out opposite. For example:
chewing clicking pens talking while others are talking
- 2 Try the following 'surprise tactics':
 - When a student gets a question right, give them a sweet or some gum till the whole class is chewing. When the session is over, go round with a bin and 'collect' the gum. Ask: *What impression do a lot of people eating sweets or chewing gum have on you?*
 - Ask the students to pick up their pens and click them all together for fifteen seconds. When the clicking session is over, ask them to put their pens down. Ask: *What effect does pens clicking in the background have on your concentration and cohesion as a class?*
 - Stop the lesson mid-flow and ask everyone to talk to their partner. Stop this 'talk session' after fifteen seconds. Ask: *What effect does this kind of noise have on the flow of the lesson?*
- 3 To highlight and add humour to other types of misbehaviour, try 'exaggerating' the behaviour, followed by reflection on its consequences. For example:
Everybody look out of the window. Everybody lean back in your chair and start rocking. Everybody shout out the answer to the next question.
- 4 Round off by asking the students to make their own list of 'disruptive activities'. How many can they come up with? Can they order them into serious / less serious?

Act It Out

Level	Any
Aim	To raise awareness of the disruptive effect of some behaviour
Duration	10 minutes
Materials	Slips of paper with instructions (see Preparation)
Language / Skills	Imperatives; modals: <i>must / should</i>

Preparation

Write down recent forms of 'misbehaviour' and prepare the slips. Make enough for a dozen or so students. For example:
Shout out all the answers. Speak in your own language all the time. Get up and leave the room. Keep clicking your pen. Look out of the window. Talk loudly to your partner while another student is speaking.

Procedure

- 1 Give out the instruction slips to about a dozen students. Tell them:
 - they should not show this slip to anybody else
 - they should follow the instruction on the slip when the lesson gets underway.
- 2 Tell the class you're going to teach the lesson as normal but as you do so the class should try to notice any unusual behaviour on the part of other members of the class.
- 3 Conduct the lesson as you would normally do. Signal that 'the lesson is now starting'.
- 4 Stop after about 15 minutes and elicit what the 'disruptive' students were doing. For example:
Maria was getting up all the time. Peter was clicking his pen. John was looking out of the window.
- 5 Write these on the board.
- 6 Ask the students what effect this behaviour had on the class. For example:
We couldn't concentrate. We couldn't hear what was going on. We didn't get much work done.
- 7 Ask students to sum up the implications of the activity by writing 'rules'. For example:
We shouldn't shout out. We mustn't click our pens all the time.

Write All About It

Level From intermediate onwards

Aim To raise awareness of discipline problems, their causes and possible solutions

Duration 5-10 minutes (in class) one hour (at home)

Materials Pen and paper

Language / Skills Passive voice: *X is caused by ...*; expressing cause and effect; suggesting solutions; modal verbs: *can, could*

Procedure

1 After a disruptive incident (when the students have had time to calm down), brainstorm three paragraphs for a composition entitled *Discipline Problems In School*. For example:

1 Examples of Indiscipline	2 Causes	3 Solutions
shouting out not paying attention arriving late	Students like to show off. They want attention. They are under pressure.	We could draw up a set of rules. We could make punishment more severe. We could make classes more motivating

2 Ask the students to write up their composition for homework, adding to the ideas brainstormed in class.

Variation

Make a poster or mind-map of the ideas resulting from the brainstorming session and display them on the wall.

Class Helpers

Level From elementary onwards

Aim To give roles and a sense of ownership of what happens in class

Duration Not applicable

Materials None

Language / Skills Instructions

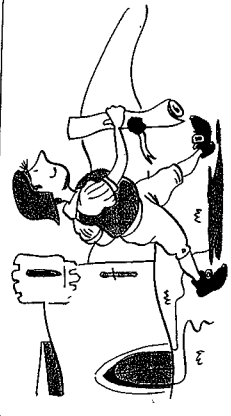
Preparation

Prepare cards with the Helper 'roles' on them (optional).

Procedure

1 At the beginning of the school week, assign different roles to different students to help you with the class. See opposite for some roles you can assign and the responsibilities they might entail.

2 Explain what the responsibilities of this person are and make sure they understand. You could give them a special role card for the week. For example:



You are the messenger this week.
Your responsibilities include:

- giving out students' work and collecting it
- taking messages outside the class if they are necessary.

Class Helper Role Cards

The Timekeeper

Possible responsibilities:

- to announce when the class starts
- to announce when the class is over
- to tell the teacher what time it is when he / she asks
- to call time on timed activities.

The Boardkeeper

Possible responsibilities:

- to clean the board at the beginning of class
- to write the day and date on the board
- to clean the board at the end of class.

The Messenger

Possible responsibilities:

- to distribute worksheets or papers to students around the class
- to collect work in for the teacher
- to deliver any messages outside the classroom as necessary during the week.

The Attendance-taker

Possible responsibilities:

- to take attendance for the teacher at the beginning of class.

Follow-up

Rotate these roles every week so that different students are given the positions of responsibility.

NOTE: Young learners often really like having positions of responsibility in the class. It gives them a stake in what's going on and helps build self-esteem. By changing these on a regular and fair basis, you ensure that everyone takes part.

A Suitable Model

Level	From elementary onwards
Aim	To raise the self-esteem of disruptive students with feedback on written work
Duration	10 minutes
Materials	A few lines from any disruptive student's written work
Language / Skills	Varied

Preparation
Choose a piece of homework written by a disruptive student and correct a few lines.

Procedure

- 1 Collect homework or set a short written task in class in order to ensure that you have a sample of written work by a troublesome student who may not normally do any homework.
- 2 Correct any language mistakes in the student's text but make sure the meaning is still the same.
- 3 In the next lesson, tell the students they are going to have a dictation as feedback on the written text.
- 4 Tell them the text is something one of them has written and that you have corrected. Do not mention the name of the student who wrote the original extract.
- 5 Dictate the student's text as feedback to the whole class on the written task.
- 6 Ask the students to check their dictations in pairs.
- 7 Point out or elicit positive features of the text and recommend that the class bear these features in mind in their future work.

Variation

Thank the student in front of the class at the end of the task if you feel this will raise the student's self-esteem further.

A Quiet Word After Class

Level	Any
Aim	To provide positive feedback and raise the self-esteem of disruptive students
Duration	2 minutes after class
Materials	None
Language / Skills	Words of praise

Procedure

- 1 The next time one of the more troublesome students behaves well in class (by participating well with a group, speaking more in English than usual, completing the exercises on time, etc.), ask him / her discreetly to stay back after class for a moment.
 - 2 When the other students have left the room, tell the student how pleased you were with his / her work today. For example:
*I noticed you spoke a lot more English today, I thought that was really good.
I saw that you finished all your exercises today, well done.
I've noticed that your English is getting better, and I wanted to tell you.*
- NOTE: This works on the same principle as Catch Them Being Good on page 55, namely that 'bad' students are more accustomed to being asked to stay after class because they have misbehaved. This way you are giving extra reinforcement to the good behaviour.

Invisible Body

Level	Any
Aim	To calm the class after a noisy spell
Duration	15 minutes
Materials	Pencil and A4 paper
Language / Skills	Parts of the body; head, hand, shin, chin, cheek, eyes, etc.

Procedure

- 1 After a noisy spell or a disruptive incident, ask the students to take a piece of paper and a pencil.
- 2 Explain that you are going to read out some words that have to do with parts of the body (e.g. head, hand) and that they have to write down the words on their piece of blank paper roughly in the position they imagine they should be on an 'invisible body'.
- 3 Dictate the words, pausing to give students time to write them down.
- 4 After you have dictated a dozen or so words (depending on the time available and the level of the class), ask the students to check their work with a partner. They should check for spelling and content: do they have the parts of the body in the same position?
- 5 Conduct a brief feedback session with the whole class to make sure all the students have the correct words in the right place.
- 6 When the feedback session is over, ask the students to link their words to form an outline of a body. Ask them to compare bodies.

Variations

With young children, replace 'bodies' with 'monsters'. The monsters can be coloured in. The end-product can form the basis of a mini-exhibition on the walls of the classroom.

You could use the same procedure to work on the following:

- names of countries (write where they are on a world map)
- rooms (write where they are on a floor plan of a flat)
- classroom furniture (write where they are in the class).

Listen Carefully

Level	Any
Aims	To encourage students to be quiet and listen
Duration	10 minutes
Materials	Instructions on cards / slips of paper
Language / Skills	Listening; speaking

Preparation

Write out the instructions for Student A and Student B below and make enough copies for each student.

Student A

- 1 Think of something interesting to tell your partner. You could talk about:
a film a book some gossip a place a hobby
- 2 Tell your partner about it with a lot of enthusiasm. You will have one minute. Keep talking.

Student B

Your partner is going to talk about something they think is very interesting. You show **no interest** in what they are saying. Show this by:

- your voice
- never making eye contact
- looking over their shoulder
- staring into space.

Procedure

- 1 Tell the students they are going to practise their listening and speaking skills.
- 2 Put the students in pairs and give each pair a copy of the instructions for Student A and Student B. Give them a minute to think about what they are going to talk about.
- 3 Ask them to do the activity. They speak for one minute.
- 4 Ask the pairs to reverse roles. Student A listens while Student B talks for one minute on a different topic. Explain that this time, Student A must:
 - remain silent for one minute
 - maintain eye contact
 - give feedback only by nodding saying 'hmm'.
- 5 When the minute is up, Student A repeats as accurately as possible what Student B said, in the first person (this is to avoid this task becoming a task in reported speech).
- 6 Ask the students to discuss the two experiments.

Mosaic Writing

Level	From elementary onwards
Aim	To provide practice in writing in a supportive atmosphere; to build a group dynamic where everyone participates
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper
Language / Skills	Varied

- Procedure**
- Give the students a title of a composition. For example: *My Favourite School Subject*
 - Ask them to brainstorm ideas together in pairs under these headings:

Useful Vocabulary	Grammar / Tenses	Topics
History Maths boring useful	present simple future: <i>it will be useful</i>	school subjects the teacher jobs

- Elicit some ideas from the whole class and ask one or two students to write up the ideas on the board, under the correct heading.
- When there are enough ideas on the board, the students begin to write on one of the topics.
- After a couple of minutes, say: *Stop! Circulate!*
- The students pass on their composition to another person, who continues exactly where the previous writer left off.
- After a minute or so, say: *Stop! Circulate!*
- Continue until you have half a dozen exchanges.
- When the composition is long enough, each student will have a different version of the topic, produced by half a dozen or more fellow-students.
- At home, the students write their own version of the 'mosaic' composition.

Dream Game

Level	From intermediate onwards
Aim	To practise writing; to guide writing with questions; to personalise writing
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper
Language / Skills	Narrative tenses; adjectives to describe objects

- Procedure**
- Tell the students that you want them to imagine that they're walking down a path, any path, anywhere. Ask them to describe the path in writing:
*Is it straight / winding / narrow / wide?
Is it in a forest / mountain / beach / city?*
 - Tell the students that as they are walking along the path, they find a stick on the ground. Ask them to describe the stick. They need to think about: size, age, colour, weight.
 - Ask them to write down what they do with the stick:
Do you pick it up / kick it / throw it away?
 - Next, they come across a fallen tree. Ask them to describe it. They need to think about: size, age, colour.
 - What do they do now?
Do you jump over / go round the tree?
 - Next, the students see a bear on the path. They describe the bear and what they do.
 - After this, they come to a river. They describe the river and what they do.
 - Finally, they come to a wall. The wall is too high to climb, too long to walk around and they cannot dig under it. What do they do?
 - Give them the solution below and ask them to go back and interpret their answers.

Solution

- The path represents your interpretation of life in general.
- The stick represents life's small problems and how you deal with them.
- The tree represents life's big problems and how you deal with them.
- The bear represents the opposite sex.
- The river represents marriage.
- The wall represents death.

Collective Dictation

Level	From intermediate onwards
Aim	To raise students' self-esteem; to strengthen group cohesion
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper
Language / Skills	Listening and writing

- Procedure**
- Divide the class into two groups.
Group 1 completes the following stem sentence on a slip of paper:
I like watching TV because ...
Group 2 completes the following stem sentence on a slip of paper:
I enjoy going to the cinema because ...
 - Collect the slips and take them home. Prepare two paragraphs based on the two sentences (see examples below):
 - connect the errors
 - connect the fragments into a whole
 - bring the level of the text up to a higher standard by modifying the grammar and vocabulary
 - supply any ideas which are needed to enrich the text and facilitate the task.

Example paragraphs based on students' own sentences

Paragraph 1
Children like watching TV for a number of reasons. First of all, there are a lot of sports programmes but there are also comedies and quiz shows ...

Paragraph 2
Some people, however, prefer going to the cinema. The cinema is more exciting because of the large screen. ...

- In the next class, dictate the two paragraphs.
- The students read over their text individually and search the text to find their original sentence. They underline it.
- They search the text again to find any connecting devices you have used in the new, connected version of the sentences.
- Now ask them to compare their text with another student and to make sure their texts are the same.

Follow-up

The students write a third paragraph, using the two dictated paragraphs as their model.

'I Like' Dictation

Level	From elementary onwards
Aim	To provide practice in writing in a supportive atmosphere; to calm a noisy class down
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper; slips of paper
Language / Skills	Varied (here: likes / dislikes; can for ability)

- Procedure**
- Hand out slips of paper and ask the students to write one sentence about themselves using *like / dislike* or *can*. Ask early finishers to write a second sentence. For example:
*I like watermelon but I dislike carrots.
I can speak French; I can play tennis.*
 - Go round the class, checking and making sure the students' sentences are correct.
 - Collect the completed slips.
 - Hand out sheets of paper and ask the students to write all the names of the students in the class down the left-hand margin, like this:
*Maria
John
Peter*
 - Redistribute a dozen or so of the slips to the class at random.
 - Ask the students with a slip to read out the sentences one by one, giving the rest of the class time to write them down. Allow the student reading to read out the sentence twice.
 - The class writes the information next to the student to whom they think it applies. If they don't know and can't guess the person, then they should write the information anyway, at the bottom of the page or on the back of the page.
 - When the dictation is complete, the students check in pairs for form (spelling, vocabulary, grammar) and for content (do they agree on the person?).
 - Do a whole-class feedback. How many people were right in their guesses?

NOTE: You can repeat the dictation on other days with the leftover slips of paper.

I Remember ...

Level	From intermediate onwards
Aim	To get students to reflect on events from their past; to calm a noisy class down
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	Pen and Paper
Language / Skills	Listening, writing and speaking; remember + -ing.

Procedure

1 Ask the students to copy the following table:

		Ages					
		6-10	11-12	13-16	17-19	20-25	26-30
2-5							

2 Tell them you are going to dictate things that happen to us at various ages. Examples you could use are:

- losing teeth
- feeling cold
- feeling angry
- feeling anxious
- riding my bike
- needing money
- falling in love
- taking exams
- feeling sad
- thinking about my hair
- leaving home

3 Ask them to write the information under the appropriate column, depending on how old they were when they remember having this experience.

4 Start dictating sentences like these:

- I remember losing a tooth ...*
- I remember falling in love ...*

5 When the dictation is over, the students turn to a partner and use the completed table to talk to each other about their memories. They should give more specific details (why, when, where, etc.). For example: *I remember feeling anxious when I was sixteen years old; I had to take an important exam.*

6 When they have finished chatting with one person, they should turn to someone else.

Follow-up

The students write a brief report on what they have learnt about their fellow students.

Catch Them Being Good

Level	Any
Aim	To provide positive feedback and raise the self-esteem of disruptive students
Duration	A few seconds
Materials	None
Language / Skills	None

Procedure

1 When you notice a usually disruptive student behaves well (e.g. by completing an exercise, or answering a question correctly), respond by praising the student publicly. Disruptive students are usually accustomed to being caught out for being bad.

2 Here are some examples of things you could say:
That's exactly the answer I was waiting for!
Excellent answer, well done!
Well done! You've finished the exercise ... In record time, too!
Did everyone hear (name)? He / She had the right answer.
Yes, you've got the right idea. Excellent.

NOTE: Make sure you do this for the well-behaved students as well and in equal measure (if possible). Disruptive students tend to get more teacher attention anyway (even if for the wrong reasons), and this can be seen as unfair by the other students.

What Happened to the Class?

Level	Any
Aim	To 'refresh' a previously disruptive class by changing the classroom layout
Duration	Five minutes
Materials	None
Language / Skills	None

Preparation

You need a class with chairs / tables that can be moved around.

Procedure

1 Stop the class after a noisy activity. Explain that you would like to reorganise the seating.

2 Quickly sketch on the board how you would like the seating arrangement to be. Here are some possible seating arrangements:

- a horseshoe shape – for whole-class discussion
- rows – for 'serious' solo work, like writing or a dictation
- small groupings of tables together – for group work
- chairs facing each other – for speaking pairwork

3 Tell the students they have three minutes to make the class seating arrangement match the sketch on the board. Help out.

4 Continue the next part of the lesson.

Variations

Instead of changing the seating around, ask the students to sit on the front of their desks and continue the lesson that way.

Tell the students to stand in a semi-circle (no pens or paper in hand) and continue the class that way. This is good for drilling or other pronunciation work.

If it is not too cold, sit on the floor in a circle. This is good for refocusing the attention, for telling a story or for whole-group discussions.

Reorganise the class seating to something completely different before the students arrive. As they come in, direct them to their places.

NOTE: It is also a good idea for you to change the place from which you usually teach from time to time.

Be My Guest

Level	Any
Aim	To introduce an outside visitor to the class
Duration	20 to 30 minutes
Materials	None
Language / Skills	Question forms

Preparation
Find an English-speaking friend or family member who could come to your class for the last half an hour or so. Ask your guest beforehand to think of an interesting anecdote or experience about their life that they would be willing to share. This could be a great / terrible job they had, a brush with death, a meeting with a star.

- Procedure**
- At the beginning of the lesson, explain briefly that someone is coming to meet the class for the last half hour, but don't make too much of this now.
 - Twenty minutes before your guest is due to arrive, tell the students to put away their books. Wait for silence.
 - Tell the students that very shortly the guest will come in. Tell them very briefly about the interesting experience / fact that the guest is going to share with them. For example:
Today's guest was once attacked by a shark. She is going to tell you about it, but you have to prepare some questions for her first.
 - Put the students in pairs and instruct them to write three to five questions they could ask.
 - Check some of the questions as a whole group. Make sure the students have different questions (not *What is your name?* thirty times!).
 - When they are ready, bring in the guest and invite the students to ask their questions, with the guest answering and asking questions, too.

Variations
If your guest has a great story, and even better, a photo to go with it, then show the photo around the class at the getting-ready stage.
If your guest is a non-native speaker of English, you could ask them to come in and talk about their experience of learning English and when they have used it in their lives.

Team Teaching

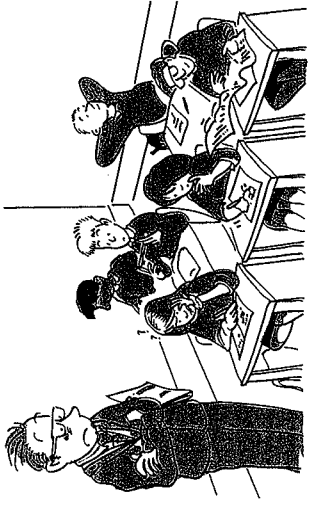
Level	Any
Aim	To introduce another teacher to the lesson
Duration	A full lesson or part of a lesson
Materials	None
Language / Skills	This will vary

Preparation
Find a colleague who will come and teach a class, or part of a class, with you and plan the class together. Ask them beforehand to plan the lesson with you. It need only be a part of a lesson, say, fifteen minutes. Decide who will do what – make the stages very clear (e.g. introduction, warm-up, presentation, practice).

- Procedure**
- Start the lesson by introducing the other teacher to the students. Explain that today you will **both** be teaching the class.
 - Take turns teaching different parts of the class. Here are some possibilities:
 - One teacher does the teacher-fronted part of the lesson and both teachers circulate and monitor the rest of the lesson.
 - Both teachers take turns running different activities.
 - The students form two groups and one teacher takes one group and the other teacher takes the other group. They swap groups halfway through the class.
 - If there is a game-type activity, each teacher is responsible for a team.

NOTE: Make sure you return the favour to the other teacher!

Mixed-level Classes



'Help! I have a mixed ability class! How on earth can I teach?'

All classes are made up of mixed levels. As soon as you put two people together, you have a mixed-level situation, especially if mixed levels are seen as more than a question of ability as demonstrated in tests of language proficiency. Mixed-level classes are also, and amongst other things, the result of:

- the different learning styles of students
- the pace at which they each learn
- their level and kind of motivation
- their personal interests
- their background knowledge
- any social problems they may be facing.

Mixed-level teaching is thus only one problem (or challenge) faced by teachers and it cuts across other 'problems', such as failure to achieve results, discipline and – the number one factor in learning a language – motivation, or the lack of it. **How** we confront the problem of 'mixed ability' or, more accurately, 'mixed-level' teaching will make a big difference to the progress we make with our students. Because mixed-level teaching is defined by diversity and making the most of diversity in the classroom, it goes to the heart of teaching.

So, in practical terms, how do we deal with the mixed-level class?

Someone said there is nothing as practical as a good theory and the ideas of Lev Vygotsky are a great source of

inspiration in building techniques for co-operative learning and making the most of diversity in the classroom. Some of these ideas have been set out in the box on page 59.

Derived from the principles outlined by Vygotsky, there are different ways of generating practical classroom techniques which we have adopted for the purposes of organising this chapter.

3.1 Different Level, Different Task

'The material is too hard for half the class, or it's too easy. It's almost like I need two coursebooks.'

The activities in the first section of this chapter suggest ways of setting different tasks for different students. This does not mean preparing two or more different lessons for the same class! Any solutions to meeting the diverse needs of students should involve a minimum amount of preparation and a maximum 'pay-off', not only in terms of language practice but also in terms of building key factors in motivating a class: self-esteem and rapport.

A basic principle will be to exploit, wherever possible, the same text but to vary the tasks students perform on that text. This principle can be applied to individual items of language or activities designed to practice the four skills: speaking, reading, writing and listening.