

WAESOL World Quarterly, Spring 2016

Letter from the Editor

Greetings WAESOL Friends!

As the new editor of the WAESOL World Quarterly, I am pleased to welcome all of you to our [spring 2016 issue](#).

The WAESOL community is filled with opportunities for professionals in the field to flourish and thrive. The call for proposals for the WAESOL 2016 Annual Conference is now open. Don't miss out on this excellent opportunity for professional development. The conference will take place in Spokane, WA this year at [Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute](#).

In the meantime, you are all invited to [share your teaching ideas](#) and classroom techniques with your peers via this quarterly. Your contributions will inspire your colleagues, and enrich this diverse community of educators to make change.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Caroline Payant, on behalf of the WAESOL community, for all the great work she has done for this publication during her time as the editor. Caroline, we are happy to continue having you as the President Elect this year.

Enjoy reading!

Nasrin Nazemi
WAESOL World Quarterly Editor

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Upcoming Conferences

[WAESOL](#)

Spokane, WA / October 21-22 2016

Watch for the opening of registration, and follow us on Twitter [@WAESOL](#) and [Facebook](#) for news and conference updates using the hashtag #WAESOL16.

[NAFSA Region I Conference](#)

Anchorage, Alaska / October 10-14 2016

[CALT Conference](#)

Tucson, AZ / November 4-5 2016

[Spokane Regional ESL Conference](#)

Spokane, WA / February 25th 2017

[TESOL Seattle](#)

Seattle, WA / March 21-24 2017

Hosted by WAESOL

It's not every day that the international conference comes to us. Don't miss an opportunity to get involved in this once-in-a-career event.

[Palouse Language & Culture Symposium](#)

Moscow, ID / April 2017



WORLD QUARTERLY

SPRING 2016

Teaching L2 Writing: Ice-breakers and Note-taking Approaches

LEKSMI NAIR

As an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor and a writing tutor, I have realized that note-taking and brainstorming are important skills. Note-taking is beneficial in an ESL class, as students get to practice listening, writing and comprehending the materials; all at the same time. Brainstorming adds on to the note-taking component, and helps students use their own written data to analyze and stimulates logical and critical thinking. One of the ways to incorporate note-taking sessions into any ESL classroom activity can be through short ice-breakers. Through brief, 5-minute exercises, teachers can lighten students and get them engaged in the class. These ice-breakers could be used in any part of the lesson plan if needed. They could also be modified and accommodated into the main tasks or post-tasks, to achieve specific learning objectives and suit the different requirements of an ESL class. I would like to share my teaching ideas to introduce effective writing and note-taking skills.

BENEFITS OF ICE-BREAKERS FOR NOTE-TAKING/ WRITING

First, I wish to discuss the benefits of teaching note-taking using ice-breakers. As a writing teacher, I perceive note-taking as an important exercise in L2 classes. In my humble opinion, note-taking has several benefits for ESL learners, including: 1) Developing vocabulary; 2) Understanding the context of their topic; 3) Organizing key ideas; 4) Developing critical appreciation and logical thinking; 5) formulating questions about the topic; and, 6) Sharing and getting feedback from peers. Ice-breakers can encourage background knowledge stimulation and also help students contextualize the learning goals of the class. They guide and create interest in students to learn new(er) ideas and make

connections with previously learnt ideas/concepts. Finally, ice-breakers could be used creatively to suit the needs of all the levels of learners.

ICE-BREAKER #1 – FREE-WRITING

The first ice-breaker technique that I use in my class is free-writing. These teacher-guided, free-writing exercises could be very resourceful for students. Teachers can consider these as a twice-a-week exercise.

Things to consider

- When selecting the free-writing theme, I try to add modern day relevance by selecting a current topic.
- I ask students to write for 3-4 minutes.
- I implement some simple guidelines. These guidelines are: the 5 sentences have to be related to each other and must have some significance for the present day reader. This approach makes certain that the students stay focused on the topic.

I enjoy this ice-breaker. Students are engaged with the theme and gather some thoughts from previous classes. They also will have some vocabulary relevant to the theme in the sentences. I also encourage them to discuss their ideas with their peers or have a class discussion after the writing. The points resurface and the entire class brainstorms in this process.

ICE-BREAKER #2 – VIDEO- VOCABULARY ANALYSIS

In this ice-breaker, I show the students a short video based on the theme and ask them to look for new information. After this, I bring up the new words/ideas on the white board or the projector and give them a different context where they have to use the words and ideas instantly. I model a sample word for them and have ideas ready for the other words. Then, I give them another word and they try to guess the meaning. This way, they go back to the video, their notes and brainstorm with their peers for a response.

Possible Benefits

- With the help of the teacher, students might be motivated to come up with a response in the limited amount of time.
- This can be a bit pressurizing or stressful, but it would feel like an engaging challenge for the students.
- The student can try and relate the words to different situations and contexts. This could help them to remember its relevance for a longer period of time.

ICE- BREAKER # 3- WORDS OF THE WEED- REVISITED

The third ice-breaker is where I make a list of all the difficult/new words that we have covered in a week and make small chits out of it. This exercise can be done every week or once a month.

There are two ways to get to this exercise:

- 1) Each student gets a word or picks one up from the bowl and writes a sentence either related to the theme or otherwise.
- 2) I put them into pairs and ask them to take 3 chits and come up with 3 sentences in 2 minutes. This exercise is followed by a quick group discussion.

Thus, ice-breakers can be designed creatively to suit the learning objectives. The teacher must have clarity and ingenuity to sense the time and space in the class. Note-taking and writing skills presented through ice-breakers can surely guide ESL students to develop a holistic outlook to appreciate learning a second language. The teacher has to follow some basic guidelines like reiterating the main concepts in the new lessons along with the old ones and carefully choosing the relevant exercises in the lesson-planning process. Also, with ample amount of revision, repeated exposure to the relevant vocabulary, similar assignments, concepts, themes, techniques and approaches, could lead to some internalizing of ideas by the students. The class discussions and follow-up homework /in-class exercises like brainstorming, small group debates and presentations, definitely help students practice writing, mold their critical thinking skills and develop their logical approaches to understanding a foreign language.



WORLD QUARTERLY

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Role-Play: A Low-intermediate Interactive Speaking/Writing Task for ESL Learners

HOLLY VIVES

As an English language teacher, I believe learners need to engage with the language in meaningful ways to develop their second language (L2) knowledge. As a result, when possible, I develop tasks that will push learners to use and hear authentic language. In this piece, I will share an idea for developing a role-play task that pushes learners to interact, with a purpose. Before providing the details of the task, I will present the theoretical framework that informs this task.

INTERACTION HYPOTHESIS

The role-play task, informed by principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), adheres to the theoretical framework of the Interaction Hypothesis. According to Gass and Mackey (2006), input, interaction, feedback, and output are important elements. Specifically, for L2 learning to occur, learners need exposure to oral/written input and need opportunities to produce language. Through these interactions, learners receive implicit or explicit feedback about their language production from their teachers and/or peers. During interaction, learners can engage in metalinguistic conversations where learners question their output and engage in self-correction. As a result of the feedback, learners may produce modified output (Gass & Mackey, 2006).

According to Swain (2005), L2 fluency is also enhanced through the noticing/triggering function that an L2 learner experiences when practicing the target language. When trying to produce language, learners may realize they might not know how to express themselves in a target-like manner. This allows them to notice gaps in their output and to engage in cognitive processes to develop hypotheses of a target linguistic structure (Gass & Mackey, 2006).

TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

TBLT methodology emphasizes pairing/group work and the use of authentic materials (Nunan 2004). TBLT lessons typically include a pre-task, task, and post-task cycle. For this interactive role-play task, students are assigned to a partner. I will now walk you through the pre-task, task, and post-task.

Pre-task: Modeling

The objectives for the pre-task is to prepare students for a role play. During the pre-task, learners are presented with a model of asking and giving advice such that the teacher and one learner model the task of asking/giving advice (see main task for the details). Overall, modeling is a good way to increase learner confidence during task performance and reduces anxiety. Also, according to Kim and McDonough (2011), modeling could also encourage discussion about language forms.

Main Task

The learning objective of the task is for students to ask for advice and/or give advice in different contexts. To set up the task, you can set up different stations throughout the classroom that display a situational notecard, namely, library, grocery store, or school. This provides opportunities for learners to practice asking/giving advice in a variety of authentic situations. Students are allowed seven minutes at each station. After a few minutes of task performance, students are reminded to use different phrases when asking/giving advice and are continually monitored to make sure they complete the writing portion of the activity.

The role-play materials

Students will receive a notecard that has a picture of an individual, an emotion listed (e.g. guilty), and a situation (e.g. I copied my friend's homework and feel guilty). Student A will use this information and create a sentence (e.g., I copied my homework and feel guilty). In addition, they should ask for advice (e.g., What should I do?). Student B would then provide concrete advice. It should be noted that the notecards will have a number (e.g. 2 or 3). This means the learner will give either two or three pieces of advice. This pushes the students to produce more output. Students giving and receiving advice should write down the advice. After each learner has had the opportunity to switch roles with the notecard, they repeat the activity again with a different situational card (i.e., a new station). It is easy for learners to forget about the writing and just talk about their situational card.

It is important to give learners the chance to move around during the task; kinesthetic learners appreciate this and it gives the lesson more variety. Negotiation of meaning can occur through learner interaction during the task. Learners placed in pre-assigned partners might give each other feedback through confirmation checks, clarification requests, and comprehension checks. While students are working, this is a good opportunity for the teacher to walk around the classroom and provide corrective feedback during group observation. This feedback can push learners to produce modified output. Allowing learners opportunities to share advice with classmates can be a fun and engaging part of the task. It can even lead to learners agreeing/disagreeing with one another.

Post-task

In the post-task, students will complete a crossword puzzle. The crossword's clues will be definitions of terms used during the task. This post-task helps solidify new information. Also, this post-task may bring out the competitiveness of learners to see who finishes first. It is a fun way to end a lesson. The crossword puzzle can be accessed through TheTeachersCorner.net under Crossword Maker.

CONCLUSION

While the lesson laid out here is intended for low-intermediate learners, teachers can make adjustments to this lesson for various proficiency levels. Words such as “embarrassment”, “hesitant,” and “overwhelmed” would be replaced with more simplistic vocabulary like “sad”, “happy”, and “angry”. Or, during the post-task portion of the activity, learners could work on the crossword puzzle together. This could create more opportunities for negotiation of meaning. If my lesson were implemented in a classroom with learners of higher proficiency, there would be a greater emphasis on writing down advice in complete sentences with attention to forms. Students would be required to turn in the advice they wrote down for assessment. This might cause them to have a greater focus on the writing portion of the activity. Also, instead of having one sentence on the notecard, there would be two for greater complexity. (e.g.: “I feel hopeless because my homework is completely incomprehensible. The written instructions do not make sense.”) A way to change the grouping strategy of this activity is to place higher proficiency learners with lower level learners. Lastly, if a small classroom makes it difficult for students to move around from station to station, groups of two can have a stack of situational notecards they work with at their desk. In summary, this lesson provides real-world, meaningful authentic materials. The TBLT approach promotes communicative opportunities for students to engage in LREs, which employs students in deeper cognitive processes. The lesson is fun and interactive and is easily manipulated to meet the needs of different learners.

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