

Planning for effective use of English in the classroom

This unit looks at

how you can help children acquire English through your own effective use of English
how your coursebook is one resource among many other resources
how detailed lesson preparation will help your own use of English in the classroom.

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Introduction

As we said in the first unit, we all start learning our first language by listening and absorbing the sounds around us.

- Children can acquire a second language the same way. The more English they hear, the more they learn.
- Our natural linguistic processes help us to adapt and acquire language as we mature.

A new language in school is

- different from the other subjects children learn
- not just about learning facts and concepts
- about communicating, i.e. being able to understand and use the language to do things.

Teaching a new language to primary children is challenging for all teachers.

If you have the same mother tongue as your pupils, you

- have to maintain your own proficiency in English
- have the responsibility of using English with your children.

But you have several advantages. You

- come from the same society as your pupils
- know in what ways their first language can help them learn English.

REMEMBER

When you use English you are

- showing children that this new language is another form of expression
- showing them that it can be used to communicate like their own language and that it can be fun
- opening doors to other cultures and customs
- passing on your own attitude and beliefs about the different people who use this new language.



10.1 Helping children learn and improve

Throughout the book we have been looking at how you can use more English when you are teaching.

We have seen how you can use English to

- begin your class
- end your class
- talk about what you are doing during your class
- organize the children and tell them what to do
- tell them how to do things
- help and encourage your pupils by commenting on their work
- play games, sing songs, tell stories
- introduce new topics
- explain what you think
- praise and encourage your pupils
- talk to them about their personal lives.

REMEMBER		
You can help your pupils understand what you say in English		
with your	by using	and by
– tone of voice	– gestures	– using familiar contexts and topics
– eye contact	– facial expressions	– rephrasing what you say in as many ways as you can
	– pictures/diagrams	– occasional use of their mother tongue
	– real things	

Using the mother tongue

Generally in teaching, we move from what is known to what is new. So on the very first day when you start to teach English you can explain to children in their mother tongue how you are going to use English during English lessons.

Teachers have different approaches to how much mother tongue they use in their lessons:

- Some teachers try not to use mother tongue right from the start. They only use English even when they teach real beginners. Of course they allow their pupils to speak in their mother tongue. But the teacher **recasts** what the children say in English.
- Other teachers use mainly English and just give a word or explanation in mother tongue if some children really need to hear this or feel uneasy.
- If the teachers are good communicators, the children quickly get used to hearing only English and gradually learn to understand more and more.
- Some children may be slow to produce English themselves but listening to the teacher speaking English works in the end.

One of the most **effective** techniques is to respond to all your pupils' questions and comments in English.

In that way you are showing them

- that you are listening
- that you can do the same things in both languages
- how to say in English what they said in their own language
- that they should try and say more in English.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 10.1a

Responding to mother tongue talk

- a** Look at the following boxes. They contain a list of questions and comments from pupils in their mother tongue and the answers the teachers gave in English. We have translated the questions into English. The teachers' answers are mixed up.
- a*** Match the questions and answers. The first one is done for you.

Children speaking in mother tongue

CHILDREN: Teacher, can I ... can I go home now?

- 1 Can I do this with Marta?
- 2 I said that, too.
- 3 Look at mine, teacher.
- 4 Can I go to the toilet now, please?
- 5 Teacher – teacher –.
- 6 Look – a bird – a bird.
- 7 I think he's going to be *recognized* ... isn't he?
- 8 I haven't got any card with red sweater written on it.
- 9 What's *cooking*?
- 10 Can I tell you my answer?

Teacher repeating what children say in English

TEACHER: Sorry? ... you want to go home? – Yes, OK.

- a Yes, you have it ... here ... don't you remember?
- b What does *cooking* mean? OK ... It's ...
- c Yes, you can do it together, but you have to be quiet.
- d Well, I didn't hear you. Say it in a loud voice!
- e I don't know ... let's see what happens ...
- f OK, Ann, I'll look at it later.
- g Yes, but in English – not in Spanish!
- h OK, go to the toilet, but that's the last one today!
- i What do you want, David?
- j Yes, there's a bird.

b **Recasting**

In the first example, the teacher **recasts** (repeats what children say in their mother tongue in English) what the pupil was saying as well as answering.

Recasting is a very important step in children's language development. It helps

- children to know they are understood
- children's acquisition of English because they hear what they said repeated in English
- to strengthen the idea that they can communicate in English as they do in their mother tongue.

You may

- have to develop the habit of recasting
- just start by recasting single words into English, then short phrases, and so on.

Here are four examples of recasting from the classes used in this book.

Notice

- that there is recasting of single words, of phrases, and of longer stretches of talk
- how the teachers do not interrupt the flow of any activity when they recast.



- 1 Children preparing to do some drawing

TEACHER: Right, you need your notebooks, your pencils, and what else?

(Child speaks in mother tongue. He feels he needs an eraser for mistakes.)

TEACHER: An eraser – yes an eraser in case you make mistakes – an eraser.



- 2 Very young learners preparing to do a matching game in front of the class

TEACHER: OK, in the envelope you have some pictures – now take them out, OK, and put them in a line ...

(Child speaks in mother tongue about putting them on the floor.)

TEACHER: Yes – on the floor – empty it on the floor – OK, you should have four pictures now – put them in a line on the floor.



- 3 Children finishing a writing exercise

CHILD: Teacher – teacher – finished!

TEACHER: You're finished? That's impossible – did you do it here or at home?

(Child explains in mother tongue that he did the exercise here.)

TEACHER: Here in class – very good – very good.



- 4 Teacher reading the story of Elmer with her class

TEACHER: When Elmer rejoined all the elephants ...

(Child speaks for a while about how all the grey elephants standing in lines look like an army.)

TEACHER: Yes – it looks like an army of elephants – doesn't it? – all grey elephants –.

REMEMBER

- **Recasting** what children say in their mother tongue helps them start using English.
- **Recasting** supports children as they are acquiring English.

c **Rephrasing what children say**

When children start to use English in class, you should encourage them. If they make mistakes, one of the best techniques you can use is **rephrasing**. Changing what the child said in English into better English without any negative comment is very supportive. When you do this:

- you show that what they said was not perfect but that it doesn't matter
- you show that what the child is communicating is valuable
- you encourage the child to continue speaking by showing that they communicated successfully
- you are helping children improve as they hear the better version of what they were trying to say
- you are rephrasing for one child but usually other children are listening too.

Rephrasing is similar to what mothers and carers do with very young children (see 1.1). They

- repeat what the child says and often add to it
- show that they understood by rephrasing and answering
- do not make comments about the form of language the child used.

We've seen that good teachers prefer rephrasing to telling the child he or she is wrong. In the lessons we recorded for this book, there were very few examples of direct correction of children's English grammar.

REMEMBER

- **Rephrasing** is a means of correction.
- **Rephrasing** is less threatening than direct correction.

d **Correcting your pupils**

We have already talked about correction in 9.5. You are more likely to use a direct correction of the form of language when your pupils are going to perform or **display** their work to a wider audience.

The reasons for this are obvious to children as well. They naturally want to do well. Good correction techniques should mean that

- you use correction as a learning tool so that it helps your pupils to **acquire** English
- when you correct language, it is clear that you are not changing what a child is trying to say
- you are trying to help your pupils to make their meaning clearer.

Think about how you can do this when you are correcting speaking. It is helpful to distinguish between

- errors of form
- errors affecting meaning and comprehension.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 10.1b

When and how to correct

In the two lesson extracts below and on the next page, the teacher, Flaviana, is getting her class to retell the story of Croc's party (see page 87).



Extract 1

- Cover up the right-hand column (Commentary) with a piece of plain paper (on which you can write your own responses). Read the Interaction column first and find four errors. Write down why you think the teacher handles each one as she does.

When you have written your ideas, uncover the right-hand column and compare responses. The commentary explains why she chooses to correct (or not to correct). Would you have done anything differently?

	Interaction	Commentary
Teacher	Yes – it was a beautiful party. OK, now, who wants to tell the whole story?	(This was the end of the first retelling.)
Vanessa	!!	Should be <i>Me</i> or <i>Can I?</i> or <i>Please!</i> Teacher ignores it, as the meaning and intention are both clear.
Teacher	OK, Vanessa, you start.	
Vanessa	Croc is sad, Croc is young. Croc is corocodil...	Pronunciation error. Teacher corrects by putting emphasis on Croc odile, as this word occurs many times in this story.
Teacher	Croc odile!	
Vanessa	I have got ...	Error affecting meaning, so teacher corrects.
Teacher	He has got ...	
Vanessa	He has got a big mouth, big teeth, and sad.	Error of form – verb is omitted. Teacher rephrases to correct, and then picks up Vanessa's idea to extend it.
Teacher	He is sad, yes. Why is he sad?	

Extract 2

Later the teacher, Flaviana, asks Giacomo to take over.

They complete the **Background** to the story, describing Al the alligator, then continue with the actual story. This extract also shows how a teacher can highlight the structure of a simple story: **Background** (setting and characters) – **Problem** – **Solution** (and how this happens), page 115 – and at the end an **Evaluation** (as in Boxes 3 and 4 in 9.2, page 113).

- ➔ Again – cover up the right-hand column and read the Interaction column. Here there are several places where Giacomo does not understand, and three where he says the wrong words. Can you find them? What do you think Giacomo misunderstood in each case? How would you correct him?

	Interaction	Commentary
Teacher	Giacomo?	
Giacomo	He's green and brown ... He's green and brown ... young ...	Wrong meaning. Teacher looks at other children to see if they agree or not.
Teacher	He's younger??	
Giacomo	... old!	
Children	... old!	
Teacher	He's seven, isn't he? Croc is young; he's two. So what is the problem in the story? What's the problem?	Teacher shows she agrees with the class response and gives the exact ages. Teacher highlights the shift to the next part of the story – the problem .
Child	The problem is corocodile	Pronunciation error. Teacher corrects by putting emphasis on Crocodile , as this word will occur many times in this story.
Teacher	Crocodile .	
Child	Crocodile is sad because ... ugly.	Error of form – <i>he</i> is omitted. Teacher rephrases to correct. She then moves on to the solution part of the story.
Teacher	Because he's ugly, OK, OK, and who helps Croc? Who solves the problem? Who has an idea to solve the problem? Giacomo?	
Child	He's ugly.	Giacomo has not understood this and goes back to the earlier correction. Teacher repeats question.
Teacher	Who has an idea to solve the problem?	
Giacomo	... organize ... a party	but Giacomo offers the solution, not understanding the meaning of <i>Who</i> .
Teacher	Who organizes a party?	Teacher tries another <i>Who</i> question, building on child's response.
Giacomo	uh uh	Giacomo may have misheard – hearing <i>he</i> instead of <i>who</i> , so he agrees.
Teacher	Who organizes a party?	Teacher stresses <i>Who</i> and finally Giacomo gets it right.
Giacomo	Al.	
Teacher	Al, very good. Al organizes a party.	Teacher rephrases, combining his last two responses.

Think about all the ways you can handle errors when children are speaking.

What do you normally do and why? Make your own list. Whatever way you choose to correct

- children should not be made to feel silly or bad
- children should always know that you are helping them. If you correct by looking – questioningly – at the whole class, the child who has spoken must not feel that he/she has done something bad
- praise every effort
- you should try to increase children's confidence and feeling of success. Every child who uses a new language shows a willingness to learn. This is wonderful. You want to encourage your pupils so always try to show your approval for their contributions: ... *really good, yes, good, much better, well done ...*

And finish activities and lessons on a positive note: ... *that was well done – fantastic work – that was great – we'll continue tomorrow.*

10.2 Using your coursebook as a resource

Many of the lessons we looked at and listened to in this book were connected with the coursebook the teacher was using.

In some of the lessons the teacher was

- using the coursebook
- extending a topic from the coursebook with her own materials and activities
- using the accompanying workbook/resource book to do some extra activities
- adapting the coursebook activities.

So the coursebook supported the teachers in their lessons and helped them in their planning.

Most of these teachers were also following a planned programme set out by their Education Boards or the National Ministry of Education in their countries. Your own teaching programme will also be guided by such factors as

- age of your pupils
- level/levels you are teaching
- needs of the class you are teaching
- schemes of work in overall school plan
- wishes and hopes of parents and school authorities
- time allowed for language lessons in your school's timetable
- time allowed for teachers to prepare materials.

Coursebooks

- offer you a prepared set of classroom activities and language, so save time
- offer children a learning aid
- set general standards
- are colourful and attractive to children.

But the coursebook is not necessarily the teaching programme. It is one of the language resources you can use. Other important resources are:

- you yourself and the way you use English, the stories you tell, etc.
- story books
- picture and word cards for various uses
- a puppet
- wall displays
- masks
- posters
- real things
- photocopiable material
- cassettes
- video recorders
- computers.

This is a list of possible resources. They may or may not be available to you.

Your coursebook may be a main resource. Some of the things listed can be supplied by the publisher as a 'resource pack' for the coursebook. But many of these resources can be made and used by the children and then used again the following year. Using real things or home-made resources helps you to use a more active approach.

And active learning, as we have seen, is more real and more fun for children.

Here are some examples where teachers are basing their lessons on coursebooks.

10A

Game 'What's the time?'

(Bell rings.)

TEACHER: Oh the bell, the bell. Always the bell. Now we're going to play a game. The game's called 'Grandma what time is it?'

(The children like this game and love playing it.)

TEACHER: OK? OK, we'll make a line here. OK, children listen. OK, I'll be your Grandma and you have to ask me ...

TEACHER AND CHILDREN TOGETHER: What time is it?

TEACHER: OK, good. So, you three, come on, pay attention. OK. Now everyone ... OK.

CHILDREN: What time is it?

TEACHER: It's four o'clock.

TEACHER AND CHILDREN COUNT: One, two, three, four ...

CHILDREN: What time is it?

TEACHER: It's three o'clock. One, two, three.

(after the game, later in the class)

TEACHER: OK, OK, Marta was eaten by the wolf. OK. Now Kevin ... OK. OK, calm down. Noise! Noise!

OK, OK, Kevin ... Come here Kevin. You are the Grandma. And OK, eeeny meeny miny mo, OK, you can say the numbers and come on ... Quiet everybody. Now pay attention, Kevin is going to say the numbers.

CHILDREN: What time is it?

TEACHER AND KEVIN: It's five o'clock.

CHILDREN: One, two, three, four, five ...

Juan with seven to eight year olds.

a Using a coursebook topic

When a topic, such as telling the time, comes up in a coursebook, it is always a good idea to

- make it an active learning experience
- expand by doing more activities to help children learn and understand
- make it more personal.



To practise both telling the time and counting, the teacher in 10A, Juan, is playing a version of the game *What's the time Mr. Wolf?*



In this situation, the children are actively learning how to count and how to tell the time in English. Active learning allows children to learn in the most natural way, by doing things. This association of language and action is a powerful memory aid.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 10.2a

Revision of classroom language functions

- o* In 10A, find and underline examples of Juan doing each of the following in English.
 - a Organizing the children and asking them to move
 - b Saying what is going to happen
 - c Using game language for equality and turn-giving
 - d Making comments on what is happening at the time
 - e Getting children to pay attention

Look again at what you underlined. Notice how much language the teacher used.

- 🎧 Listen to the phrases again on your CD and practise pronouncing them with suitable intonation.

RECORD Record them on to your cassette.

10B

Read and match

TEACHER: OK, we're going to do an activity from your class book. So page 43. Find the page and have you got your pencils?

(A child asks the teacher something in the mother tongue.)

TEACHER: Sorry? Yes, OK.

So now everyone you're going to work in pairs. And you have to look and find. Now look at your book. It's 11 o'clock and it's playtime in this school. Can you see the number? You have to find these people. There's a boy eating a sandwich yum yum yum. Can you see him in the picture? What number is it? Where is he?

CHILDREN: Oh... yes...

TEACHER: Can you see number ten?

You have to look and find the people who are doing these things.

TEACHER: Now work in pairs. OK, Ann can you work with Helen. And you two work together. And you two and you three. And you sit down with Jane please. OK, do you understand? OK? Sure?

(later in the class)

TEACHER: OK, very good. Fantastic.

So now can you tell me? You're going to read out the sentences and the others can call out the number.

OK? You can start...

CHILD: Three boys are playing football.

CHILDREN: Number 4.

Emi with eleven to twelve year olds.

b Using text-based activities

REMEMBER

Listening and speaking are the first forms of communication in all languages. Reading and writing are the second skills children learn.

When children are used to listening and speaking in English, a well-illustrated coursebook is a useful support. When children can read and write, the coursebook becomes another source of **language input** which they can learn from on their own and gain great benefit from.

A matching activity

Now listen to Emi, the teacher in 10B, getting her class to do an activity from their workbook.

Here the children are looking at pictures and reading descriptions. They have to read and match each description with the correct picture.

In 10B, notice how much language the teacher is using with the children when giving instructions and telling them what to do. Because the lessons are all in English, children are getting good experience of English in use.

In this extract, the teacher uses a variety of basic grammar patterns – giving opportunities for the children to absorb them naturally and understand how they are used.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 10.2b

Useful phrases with common words and patterns

In 10B, the aim of the lesson in the coursebooks is obviously practice of verbs in the present continuous form – *eating, playing*, etc. Let's look at the extra English the children hear from their teacher. For example, the teacher uses eight other verbs (*look, find, work, see, sit, read out, call out, tell me*).

- o→ 1 Verb patterns. How many phrases can you find in 10B containing each of these verbs? Practise saying the whole **phrase** they are used in:

going to have to have got can you can

- o→ 2 Find all the questions the teacher uses. There are around 12. How many different ways of asking questions does she use?



When you have found them, listen to them again on the CD and say them along with the teacher, using similar **intonation**.

- o→ 3 Prepositions. Which two verbs are followed by *out*?

Look up the word *out* in a learners' dictionary and see how many different meanings and uses it has. Choose three that might be useful for you and write them down in a longer sentence of your own.



Pronunciation point: silent letters

- o→ 1 Which letters in the following words are not pronounced? Underline them.

answer knees know combing wrong
whoever listen write lamb

- 2 Do you know any other common words in English with silent letters?

Before we go on to look at planning lessons, we hope that in this section on coursebooks you have noticed

- how the teachers used their coursebooks – extending the activities to increase their pupils' learning opportunities
- how much English they used while directing, organizing, talking about what was in the coursebook.

10.3 Planning your lessons

As primary teachers, you have to think about long-term and short-term objectives and plan your scheme of work accordingly. You can also plan how to use more English with your pupils.

As you prepare your various English courses, it may help if you classify your planning into sections.

1 Before the course

Before you start a new term or a new class, think about how you can

- create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in your classroom
- arrange the room so that it is easy to move around
- make sure you have wall space for any displays you want to use and that there is space at the correct level, so that children can point out items in pictures
- if you do not stay in the same room, use fold-up cardboard displays, or roll-up friezes, or posters
- make displays that can be used and re-used for several language practice activities
- display children's work with their names
- let displays grow, but when children tire of them go on to something new
- start or increase your collection of nice activities for children who finish early or who are doing something separate, for example, *small puzzles or picture-card games or a book to look at*
- plan to connect some of the topics you use throughout the year, e.g. *from pets at home to zoo animals.*

Which of these do you already do? Tick (✓) those. Arrow (→) the ones you have not done but would like to do in the future.

2 General lesson preparation

For any lesson it is always useful to

- remember that you teach English by using English in your lessons
- prepare all the materials you need beforehand
- think of your lessons as small steps and so sequence activities carefully. Try to have a quieter activity after a lively, energetic one. (In Juan's class, 9A, a story follows a noisy game.)
- tell children what you are going to do and help them see the reasons for what they are doing
- have some clearly developed routines because children feel secure with patterns they can depend on
- remember what you know about how children acquire language
- ask yourself why you are doing each activity and what opportunities the children need to listen, speak, read, or write
- plan how you can make best use of the language the pupils are already familiar with
- plan good learning tasks for new language, where the context helps children to understand
- try to give individual attention to different children so they know you are aware of how they are getting on (you can do this with different children over a number of classes)
- decide how you want to group your pupils and where they need to be for the various activities you will use.

3 Specific language planning for a lesson

Prepare what you are going to say when you

- greet your pupils
- talk to your pupils as you start/finish your English lesson – different topics and routines
- set up an activity – arrange the room – organize your pupils – say what you are going to do – and give instructions
- speak to groups or pairs or individuals if you have the opportunity
- want to say something positive to your pupils.

There are many ways of organizing your lessons and you know your own situation best. Many teachers like to have a set plan that they follow to give a pattern to their lessons and help them plan efficiently. Always remember that you know your teaching situation best and you should develop your own plan to suit your classes and circumstances.

NOTE

There is no 'Further ideas' section in this unit, but please read 'Over to you' for lots of ideas on what to do next.