

We just play games

EFL teaching approaches in the
EAP classroom on pre-university
pathway programmes

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outline

- Background to EFL/EAP context here on Newcastle University Pathway Programmes
- The challenge
- Framing / reflection and sharing – a personal strategy
- Task – discussion of activities
- Summary and Questions

We just play games

- Board of Studies
- Dean of UG studies in HaSS, Dean of UG studies in SAgE,
- Student rep
- 'We just play games'
- Tongue Twisters
- Toes Curling!

Context

- Academic pathway programmes – Foundation, Diploma, Graduate Diploma
- Academic content modules and EAP; 10 hours / 5 hours per week for 23 weeks
- Entry 5.0 for Foundation, 6.0 for Diploma, 5.5 for Graduate Diploma
- Exit 6.5 for all
- China, Russia, Middle East, Nigeria, South Asia, South East Asia, South America, Cyprus
- Typical entry level range 5.0-7.5/8.0

Changes and challenges

- 2006-2007: IFP 28 students, 3 FTE EAP staff
- 2009-2010: Foundation, Diploma and Graduate Diploma 518 students, 20 FTE EAP staff
- 2006-2007: staff average EAP experience was 10 years; 2009-2010 average 4 years, with 11 under 4 years of EAP
- 2006-2007: staff qualifications – 60% had DELTA/Dip and/or MA, 2009-2010 35% DELTA/Dip and/or MA
- 2009-2010: 20+ hours contact a week

Academic content – EAP and motivation

- Feedback in SSC and questionnaire feedback tends to show students feel their academic programme is their key motivator
- EAP is core module; student level indicates clear need for English level improvement; and students do feel this need
- But, a sense that academic modules are their *raison d'être*
- Profile of academic content colleagues tends to show an older, longer teaching/professional experience (15 + years), with commercial presentation/training backgrounds

The challenge

- Highly motivated, academically-focussed, sometimes 6.5 +, coming from academic content modules with often highly experienced staff, meeting less experienced, younger EAP staff many with CELTA as only pre-service qualification with limited experience....
- Observations and student feedback showing frustration with techniques / methodology even presentation

EFL methodology and transferability

- Experience pre-INTO and since INTO often with 6.5+ groups for EAP, 18-23 in size
- TEFL, I'm trained, I'm trainer, 'touchy-feely' by nature
- Engage groups by encouraging them to see skills within and behind tasks and then to consider the real transferability of these in terms of their degree programme goals
- Pre-activity as part of set up prepare the ground; Post-activity- ask them to evaluate what they did and how they did it and how the skills they used have wider relevance for them

An example

- Tongue twisters – sitting alone in study bedroom, preparing your presentation, checking and practising pronunciation, consonant clusters, word-end/word-beginning boundaries are crucial
- Dictogloss – post-lecture, difficult topic, chatting and comparing notes with peers, piecing it all together, negotiating meaning and even form

This might add significantly to EAP learning / teaching in our context:-

- Reflection a major part of many degree programmes; a good skill to foster
- Strategic learning – cultures placing an emphasis on exam-based/results rather than deep understanding
- Maintains focus on the student's goal – degree programme study context
- Allows teacher with less experience to use EFL activities/games with a rationale
- Helps develop less experienced EAP (EFL!) teachers by asking them to more deeply consider their task-choices
- Reduces planning workload on less experienced staff – use what they are confident with but 'share' the rationale

For us to consider

- Shouting/whispering dictation
- Mad discussions
- Back to the board and other definition games
- Charades – thanks to Laura and Fiona for reminding us at Glasgow PIM!
- Mingles
- Jigsaw reading
- *Any of your own suggestions??*

Summary

- Engaging students in what we are encouraging them to learn (product) BUT also in what they develop in the process
- At least two categories of transferable skills– *language skills* (defining, responding to opinions) and *study skills* (dealing with redundant noise in lectures)
- Potential for some research into learner perspectives

Questions?