

TEACHERS AS MENTORS

Learning during and through teaching practice

Key challenges and strategies for new teachers: A short handbook

Open Educational Resource



Edited by:

Melinda Dooly

Anna Nicolaou

Compiled by:In-service teachers:

Spyroula Mavrommati

Albina Almodôvar

Rafaela Kožlakar

Isabell Strobl

Cláudia Costa

Tuba Topluk

Student-teachers:

Beyza Kuçuk

Beyza Özdemir

Mert Dinç

Muhammet Ilker Kabakçi

Ogulcan Durmaz

Ahmed A. A. Mohamed

Ayşenur Çoban

Eda Yıldırım

Enes Us

Umut Berkgün Nebioğlu

Alp Sehit

Ahmet Emre Keser

Gülnihal Ay

Zeynep Ahsen Mortas

Sevval Alageyik

Umut Akça

Created within the framework of the VALIANT project (<https://valiantproject.eu/>)

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Introduction

This e-booklet is derived from the collaborative work between pre-service and experienced teachers who worked together to identify, discuss and come up with strategies for key topics that novice teachers face as they move into the workforce. In some cases, the identified situations are more general (chapters 1 and 2) and in the third case, the identified challenge is more specifically related to the discipline of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

These chapters were co-authored through the following process. First, while meeting online (synchronously and asynchronously) in a 6-week online module piloted for the VALIANT project, the pre-service teachers discussed the challenges that they felt were most significant for them during their practicum period. These were discussed (asynchronously) with in-service teacher mentors who were also taking part in the online module. The in-service teachers provided strategies and ideas for dealing with these situations, and the pre-service teachers then explored and reflected on the ideas before deciding what to include in this book. All the participants then worked together to design the material you will find herein.

The work that is presented here aims to be a reflection from teachers on the greatest challenges of education today, as identified by them. One of the most interesting things that emerged from this co-authoring experience is the realization that the problems teachers face daily in classroom contexts have no boundaries and that through Virtual Exchange teachers of all levels (preservice and in-service) can deepen knowledge and seek solutions together. This Virtual Exchange was based on the notion that a teacher is a modelling, behavioral, learning and relationship agent. It was also designed with the firm conviction that teachers must be given a voice regarding what are the challenges they face in their daily lives and what are the best solutions. That said, it is acknowledged that there are no recipes or infallible one-size-fits-all techniques for school success but bringing together many heads to collaboratively discuss and propose strategies can enhance individual teaching practice. It is not the teacher who creates a good student but the whole community. We feel that work like this is always important and that it is essential to foster dialogue with a lot of colleagues focused on the same problems and looking for solutions. We hope you will enjoy and reflect with us.

Chapter 1

Digital literacy and digital inequality challenges in schools after the pandemic

Contributors

Albina Almodôvar, Beyza Küçük, Beyza Özdemir, Mert Dinç, Muhammet Ilker Kabakçı,
Ogulcan Durmaz, Spyroula Mavrommati

Introduction

Knowing how to manage information, media, and technology literacy can be counted as some key 21st century skills for teachers. In addition to well known and widely suggested problem-solving and critical thinking skills, many teachers feel they lack the necessary knowledge to adapt media and technology into their classrooms effectively and often feel the need for staying up to date.

And while most teachers are aware that technology integration is a necessity in the 21st century, however, many teachers today struggle with integrating technology into the classroom. In this century, digital competencies are needed for teaching each level and age to ensure effective and interactive education. This is applicable across the board and implies that technology use in the classroom is not based on instructors' age (e.g. it's not just for younger teachers), and although one should view technology use as a personal decision, it is strongly encouraged that all teachers try to bring some technology into their teaching. However, some teachers seem less prone to use it.

This may be because technology integration can be a challenge for teachers, especially due to the forced high digitalization during the lockdown periods and lack of adaptability and preparedness of teachers for such a revolutionary paradigm shift. Moreover, the use of technology in the classroom may not be coherently distributed in the same school or centre. While some teachers use technology in their classrooms too much, others may not use it at all, or less efficiently, which creates an imbalance and causes students to lose focus of the topic easily.

This also affects the motivation of the students towards a class; if they feel as though there is more technology use and gamification in one class, they may not feel as excited or encouraged to participate in other classes where there is less technology use. Thus, in order to make our classrooms more encouraging and keep up with the advancements in society, teachers must be equipped with digital literacy.

Digital Literacy

Teachers who lack digital literacy are a major reason for this difficulty. When they cannot use technology efficiently, today's students easily get bored with the lesson because they feel it is not interactive and modern. For instance, when one of the authors in this chapter was a high school student, their English language teacher was against technology use in the classroom and therefore he did not utilize any tools. The lessons were based on rote memorization, which were not interactive and very boring. One day, the class managed to persuade him to use Quizlet in the classroom for studying new vocabulary items. The lesson became really fun, and everybody enjoyed it. This is an example of a very simple strategy that all teachers can integrate into their teaching.

The insufficiency of teachers for digitalization has its roots in preservice teacher education. While it is becoming more common, it seems that most of the teacher education programs still do not include courses to provide teachers with such digital competencies.

In addition, apart from this lack of education in regard to digital competencies, teachers might not be able to use or adapt their classroom management skills into a technology based classroom, due to several reasons, such as lack of infrastructure or administrative support. Also teachers as individuals may differ in personality and their techniques in teaching and many may not feel completely comfortable working with technology when teaching students who are often more digitally literate than they are.

However, we propose that age should not be an obstacle for using technology in the classroom. If you like being a teacher, then you should be ambitious, and caring. As the above example shows, it is important that teachers realize that they can learn about new ways to teach the content in a more efficient way, including the efficient use of technology. The key is to love your profession and care about your students' progress and to be willing to take risks to make sure that your students enjoy learning.

Strategies and ideas for ensuring teacher digital competence

- **Digital Literacy as a Course in pre-service education**

Before discussing the importance of digital tools and activities, it should be taken into consideration that there is a huge responsibility of the ministries of national education in every country to ensure digital teacher competences. As can be seen, the Coronavirus has

affected our lives both negatively and positively. Because we could not have any face-to-face classrooms, we all had to survive by using technological apps such as zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc. to maintain our education. Thanks to (!) Corona, not only the students, but also the instructors had to improve their digital literacy to adapt to online classrooms. However, it must be acknowledged that there are some teachers who have difficulties in adapting themselves to the new circumstances. We believe that the Ministries of Education worldwide have the huge responsibility to foresee and help prevent similar circumstances in the future. They should ensure that the preservice teacher programmes include digital literacy training during the bachelor degree program as well as providing in-service continued education to promote digital literacy among all teachers.

- **Mentorship Courses**

We suggest making use of mentorship for teachers who hesitate to use technology in their classes. Reluctant teachers can be given courses for an academic year to help them understand the importance of technology use in their teaching and to improve their general technological know-how. These courses can be complemented by mentorships that provide general support as the teachers gradually introduce their technological knowledge into their teaching practice.

- **Detailed and well-designed lesson plan**

If teachers make use of well- organized lesson plans that integrate technology into these plans, it could help them manage the classroom more easily. They can make technology less distracting for students and increase the efficiency in the classroom. The mentorship, mentioned above, can provide support while low-technology teachers are first learning to integrate technology into their planning.

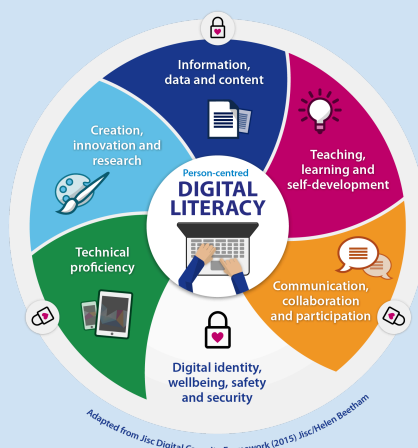
- **21st Century Skills**

As we aim to learn about technology and its benefits in terms of education, we learn 21st century skills as well. For instance, technology literacy is the first one that comes to one's mind as it is our main topic. The next one would be flexibility. With the help of technology, we can have greater flexibility in our lessons and help our students with their workloads.

- **Digital Literacy Trainings for In-service Teachers**

Teachers should be offered free training for digital literacy (we refer back to our section on the responsibility of Ministries of Education). In these courses, they can enhance their skills in basic applications such as PowerPoint/ Slide and Word/ Docs. They can get this training

at their schools or online. For online learning, Udemy, Coursera and YouTube can be used to learn how to use computers and the internet effectively.



- **Use Web 2.0 Tools**

Secondly, teachers can use different Web 2.0 applications such as Kahoot and Quizlet. By integrating such applications, they can make their lessons more interactive and fun. We also suggest that teachers ask their students to recommend to them new apps or tools that might be useful in the classroom.



- **Collaborate with Software Developers**

Teachers can facilitate creation of new applications by conducting studies in the classroom. For example, they can observe major concerns in the classroom and collaborate with software developers to solve these difficulties by proposing an application idea.

So in summary, for the preservice teachers, preparatory courses for technology use should be added to their curriculum. Secondly, implementation of such courses also should be integrated into their programs, with support from mentors during the initial stages. Finally, considering quickly changing digital technologies, Ministries of Education must make sure that in-service teachers are also trained regularly as well.



There can be educational programs, booklets, videos, or seminars provided to the teachers to teach them new classroom management strategies or how to adapt the strategies they already know into a technology integrated classroom. There can also be services for the teachers, such as a website in which the teachers can ask for help if any trouble arises.

Finally, it is important to establish minimal and upper limits in terms of technology use by the teachers in the classrooms. This way, we can prevent the imbalance and increase the efficiency.

Additional Resources

<https://www.collegestar.org/modules/using-web-2-0-tools-to-engage-learners>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7etwbRgqsg&ab_channel=NewEdTechClassroom

<https://www.aver.com/AVerExpert/the-importance-of-apps-in-the-classroom>

<https://colorwhistle.com/top-e-learning-web-apps/>

<https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship/curriculum>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Arl6albrkuY>

https://www.ted.com/talks/tyler_dewitt_online_learning_could_change_academia_for_good

<https://exclusive.multibriefs.com/content/a-balanced-approach-to-technology-in-the-classroom/education>

<https://www.thetechedvocate.org/find-balance-teaching-technology/>

<https://medium.com/hackernoon/technology-in-the-classroom-6-ways-to-get-the-balance-right-d83e2ee0403e>

Illustrations



Chapter 2

Managing the Classroom while Creating motivation

Contributors

Ahmed A.A. Mohamed, Ayşenur Çoban, Eda Yıldırım, Enes Us, Isabell Strobl
Rafaela Kožlakar, Umut Berkgün Nebioğlu

Introduction

Managing young children can be quite challenging for new (and not so new) teachers. Primary education students tend to be very energetic and vocal, and sometimes keeping the classroom under control seems impossible. It often happens that students tend to talk to each other while the teacher gives the instructions, which disturbs those who actually listen. Because they are young learners, they easily get distracted and thus can not finish the tasks on time. Other times, some students may not listen to the teacher and walk around the classroom during the lesson which distracts others and soon they are not listening either. This leads the teacher to have to call them out by name several times, contributing even more to the general sense of lack of classroom control. Overall, since the students are too young, it is hard to control them. Additionally, the current conditions caused by the pandemic conditions do not help because the masks bother the students, they are in a small classroom and must try to keep the social distance.

Possible Root of the Problem

One of the reasons for the distractions may be the students' lack of interest, because the students already know certain content, or the content is uninteresting. Or perhaps the way of working does not suit the student, as students at this age need a variety of methods when they are presented with learning content. Pajk's master's thesis (2019, p. 24) mentions quite a few studies that have shown that the role of the teacher is extremely important, especially the effective management of the class at the beginning of the school year. Thus, teacher inexperience can also be the cause of some behaviors in the classroom.

Strategies and ideas for dealing with distracted young learners

- **One Minute for Health**

In some of the Slovene schools, a practice called "One minute for health" is used, which can be useful for many different situations. In this case, where the students have too much

energy, a minute for health can be used as a prop to get the excess energy out. Here are some examples:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9jS1bqBUVs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziLHZeKbMUo>

- **Vocal Exercises**

If the students tend to be vocal, then it is good if you include vocal exercises in the minute of health. One other way of keeping the classroom under control is to maybe include chants. The teacher starts the change students will join. After breaks, it is useful to do a relaxation exercise. For younger students, you can use only music:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijPmjObXyS0>

- **Tai Chi**

Tai Chi is another alternative for older students. We recommend music for younger students and Tai Chi for older students:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8acXL1jLFAo>

- **Flexible Seating**

Some schools use so-called “flexible seating” or “moving chairs”. The chair absorbs and encourages movement while at the same time improving the attention span of the children while being engaged in the learning process.

Here are some examples:



- **Gamification**

Gamification is a great strategy to keep young students on-task. It is very useful to use gamification at different stages of the lesson. Examples of gamification platforms/apps include Kahoot, Quizlet, etc. We can also use the escape room for group work. A digital escape room motivates students to complete tasks that target their learning focus in order to derive a password that unlocks the digital locks to open a box that usually contains learning materials or instructions for carrying out tasks. Digital escape rooms are very enjoyable and practical; teachers do not need to prepare physical materials for it. It can be created using google forms.

Additional Resources

<https://kahoot.com/schools-u/>

<https://quizlet.com/en-gb>

Magistrsko_delo_Mariša_Pajk.pdf (Ljubljana, 2019)

<https://www.inovativna-sola.si/>

<https://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/>

<https://www.freotech4teachers.com/>

<https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en/blog/flexible-seating-classroom-ideas/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9jS1bqBUVs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziLHZeKbMUo>

Illustrations



Chapter 3

Help, I am about to become a teacher!

Contributors

Alp Sehit, Ahmet Emre Keser, Cláudia Costa, Gülnihal Ay, Zeynep Ahsen Mortas,
Sevval Alageyik, Tuba Topluk, Umut Akça

Introduction

Before providing ideas and strategies regarding individual differences in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, it is important to provide some key definitions and examples of the problems faced by the pre-service teachers:

Subcategories:

- Individual Differences: Proficiency levels, student profiles, diversity: The English level of the students may differ vastly. While some of them can talk about themselves or speak fluently, some cannot even use basic verbs correctly.
- Lack of Motivation: Students often show a lack of motivation to learn English because English is not tested in centralized achievement exams. Primary education students are experiencing the negative effects of online education after coming back to school as they have to adapt to educational life face-to-face. They may have difficulties in participating in the ongoing lesson and following the instructions given by their teachers. Some of the students are not doing their homework on time and it has been observed that some students do not have enough motivation to complete their school-related works.
- Teacher-Student Interaction: It is hard for the students to adapt to the pre-service teachers' style of teaching because it is different than they are used to.
- Reluctant Students: During one of the author's practicum period at school, the pre-service teacher observed that 11th graders were taking their speaking exam in EFL. But, one of the students refused to take this mandatory and 15 points oral exam. The teacher just said, 'Okay, it's up to you!' So, in such a situation where students refuse to complete mandatory tasks, how should a teacher approach the students?

- Students' adaptation to face-to-face education: Due to the Covid outbreak, group activities and pair work seems impossible, and this reduces the interaction between the students which has a big impact on their speaking skills. Most students challenge the teacher's authority because this is their first face-to-face term in high school, and they lack the necessary experience regarding how to act in a class environment.
- Inconsistency between theory and practice: There seems to be a gap between what we have learned from education courses we took and the real teaching reality, which often contradicts each other.
- Sociocultural and Socioeconomic Differences: As the policy of the Ministry of Education has changed in terms of high-school placement a few years ago, the students around the same district are expected to attend the same school, which creates an environment where there are students from various backgrounds. Thus, there is an issue of arranging the courses and materials because the student profile may change every year as they do not attend the high-school solely based on their academic achievements.

Strategies for dealing with a multi-level ELT classroom

One of the biggest challenges that the teachers face in English lessons is that the students may be in different proficiency levels yet they are required to be in the same class. It is a big dilemma to create a curriculum and plan for all the students with different levels while integrating all the students in the class. For example, you may have a student who cannot even describe themselves with a paragraph. In contrast, another student can write wonderful essays without even punctuation mistakes in the same classroom. Teachers may encounter such a problem regardless of the age of the students.

Such a gap usually happens whenever students are either grouped randomly in the English classes. Of course, like many other things, English level isn't something that is one-size-fits-all; there are obviously some students with different levels and capabilities regarding English. However, as instructors, we want this gap to be as small as possible to facilitate the learning process more sufficiently. Whenever teachers face such problems, they need to create a classroom that appeals to all students.

Although there are many things that the teachers should consider to deal with such an issue, below are some possible solutions and strategies we can use in an English class with different level learners.

- **Intentionally Arranged Group Work**

Group work can allow students to learn from one another for sure. However, if we let students choose their own group, they may not group themselves the way we want them. What we want to do is to group them according to their strengths and weaknesses. If we can balance the group work, then we can create an authentic activity that will actually benefit the students.

- **Teaching in Different Ways (Differentiated Teaching)**

Teaching a topic by using different materials and adopting different strategies might be a good solution. We may adjust the content, process or product to achieve this. For instance, in a course, we may use verbal, audio and visual aids to reach all the students. In this way the students will be integrated in the lessons and they will all learn. It is also important to integrate gamification in the lessons which is another way to adapt diverse strategies in the same classroom. One of the most useful resources to learn more about differentiation may be found here:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/classrooms/Pages/approachesitsdifferentiation.aspx>

Here are some more useful resources that may help the teachers with differentiated teaching:

<https://deacollege.ca/4-strategies-to-teach-different-levels-of-esl-students/>

<https://www.englishclub.com/teaching-tips/teaching-multi-level-classes.htm>

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/differentiated-instruction-english-language-learners>

How to deal with reluctant students

Teaching is a multifaceted profession that requires a teacher to deal with many issues such as organization of knowledge, personal relationships, external influences, student feelings, and self-constraints or concerns. When all these dynamics are scrutinized, we see the reciprocal teacher-student relationship at the center. To build a strong relationship, there might be several ways and methods depending on the learner profile, but fostering student motivation might be a good start. However, it may not always be possible to find a motivation source for the students, as they may resist or be reluctant to participate in the activities or interpersonal interactions. To dwell on this issue, maybe taking a moment to

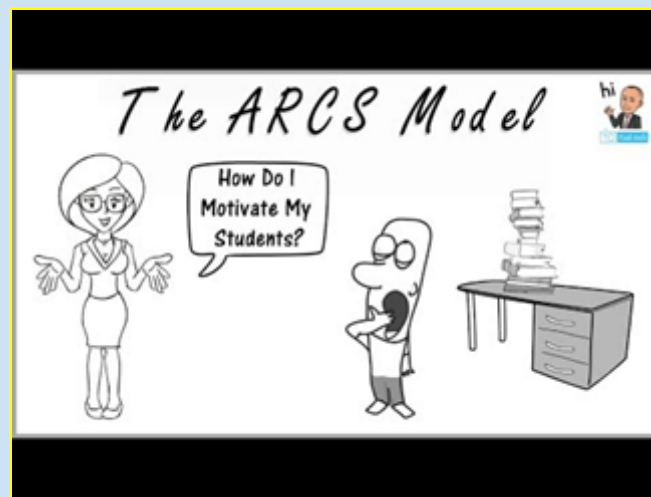
think about the case experienced by a pre-service teacher would help us, in-service and pre-service teachers, to come up with ways to motivate reluctant students;

We refer to the above example in which 11th graders were taking their speaking exam which was mandatory and worth 15 points and a student refused to participate. The teacher simply said, 'Okay, it is up to you!' but is this way a teacher approaches a student who refuses to participate?

This is actually a common problem that teachers face. Many possible reasons might cause student reluctance. For example, irrelevant instructions, a disconnect between the classroom activities and real-world, student's personality (being shy), teacher disengagement in the activities/interactions, health/psychological problems (e.g., ADHD), etc. may all be underlying causes. To deal with this, the first action to be taken can be detecting the source of the problem. Then, the best solution that you can use might be found:

- **Using the ARCS Model**

ARCS is an acronym for the words attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Here, you can watch the video and decide whether you can adapt the model in your case.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYu90ZK2WUA>

- **20 different strategies**

Here is another website that provides 20 different strategies for motivating reluctant learners. You can choose the ones that fit your situation and learner profile the best.



20 Strategies for Motivating Reluctant Learners | KQED

- **Theme-Based Projects**

By using theme-based activities, you can edge on the inner motivation that your students need. Here you can find an example of how to design such an activity developed by an ESL teacher.

Here are some ways you can use this approach in your classroom:

- I started with an art theme I called "Self-Portrait" in which we studied adjectives, artists who draw self-portraits and read short biographies. I pulled non-fiction reading materials from the internet and library books. The students created their own self-portraits, wrote their biographies, and presented these in class. The students created their self-portraits with only art supplies, not computers, although we used computers through much of the lessons.
- Other theme-based projects I used included newscasts (local, national, global), animal expert books, save the ecosystem, inventions that changed the world, and numerous others. You can be inspired by the stories or topics you already use in class. What brought excitement to the highly motivated and less motivated students was incorporating multimedia into the lessons and projects. After reading a text, gathering information, and/or researching a topic, we studied the meaning of keywords. We worked on the pronunciation/decoding of a word, part of speech in the reading, lastly we focused on the contextual meaning. If a word had multiple meanings, we would explore the others briefly.
- At the end of each thematic unit, the students had a project to complete from the many preceding lessons. For example, we videotaped our newscast complete with maps, signs, and nameplates on the desk. The animal experts and save the ecosystem projects both used [Glogster](#) to create online posters. The students were highly motivated by the visual media aspects of Glogster; they added text, pictures and video clips to their electronic posters. The unit on inventions culminated in building [simple machines using levers and pulleys](#), etc.



Using Theme-based Projects to Motivate Reluctant ESL High School Students
(readinghorizons.com)

Lack of motivation

At times, teaching can be very demanding as students usually have different motives for learning. There might be personal or environmental problems within the students' world that may halt them from learning, and there are also some systematic reasons for the student's lack of motivation. In this section, the lack of motivation caused by systematic reasons will be discussed. In order to have a better understanding of the issue, it should be noted that, in Turkey, the standardized exam for being accepted to the universities has no English testing component unless the students want to pursue their degree in a few English-related programs such as English Language teaching or English literature. Therefore, the rest of the students who want to pursue their degree in any other field do not have to study English. This situation creates a lack of motivation to study, participate or even complete the assignments for the English courses taught at the high school level. Students show little motivation, especially in the junior and senior years, with the reduced class hours allocated for the English classes. At the levels mentioned above, English classes are being deemed as free time to study for other courses.

During my observations, I have noticed this exact behavior of the 11th-grade students. It should be noted that the high school that I am currently observing is one of the best high schools in the area and offers an additional one-year preparatory program for students to learn English alongside with few other courses which is usually not the case for many other high schools. Still, just because they had an exam coming up for the Math class, students silently studied and revised for that exam, and the English class for the day was dismissed. The English teacher was the initiator for the exam revision. She stated that students were free to study for the upcoming Math exam if they kept silent. It seemed as though English had less value than other subjects within the school. As Dağgöl (2013) also states in their study about lack of motivation in a Turkish school context, when a student fails to meet the deadlines for the completion of the English homework, students often argue that they had other important assignments, projects, and exams for other courses and therefore they should be excused. Defensively, their failure to meet the class requirements is more than often accepted by the English teachers.

This incident, along with many other issues stated by my fellow teacher trainee friends, solidified my argument that, at least in public schools in Turkey, English classes are often overlooked and overshadowed by other classes. Some of the following strategies could be followed by the English teachers to overcome the aforementioned problem:

- **Teachers should be clear about the importance of the English lessons**

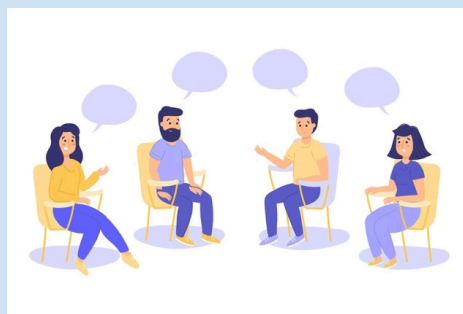
Teachers may use a few class hours to explain why English is taught and how the learners can benefit from paying attention to the lectures by also stating how they can boost their motivation. Teachers may want to stop treating their lessons as free time for students to study for other subjects. This behavior can lead students to believe that English is inferior to other classes when the teachers themselves solidify the notion.

- **Students can be asked to list their reasons for learning English**

Generally, when the students are asked to think critically, they start to realize certain motives. It helps the students to realize why they should start giving more attention to the English classes. For example, even though it is not tested, learning English will be helpful for the students to understand songs, movies, and books. Even turning this strategy into a classroom activity may help students use their speaking, listening, and writing skills while solving one of the dire reasons behind students' low motivation towards English classes.

- **The teachers, if applicable, can use alternative resources that suit the classroom's needs to further allure the students into English classes**

For instance, the teachers may modify their lesson plan and activities according to the needs of their students instead of following a rigid plan in which the students cannot relate to the topic and eventually have lower interest. One suggestion is to apply the Soft CLIL(Content Language Integrated Learning) approach to a certain level. If the whole class has a biology exam next week, the teacher, even if they have no qualifications about the designated subject area, can find material about animals, the human body, or any related subject and go over those materials in the classroom. Thus, students can also learn about specific terminology and have a surface-level idea about the topic. By doing so, students will use all four skills and have a fruitful time in the English classes.



Students' adaptation to face-to-face education: Lack of Group/Pair Work

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, group activities and pair work seem impossible, and this situation reduces the interaction between the students, which significantly impacts their speaking skills.



Almost two years after being in a virtual learning environment, leaving the screens and being present in physical classrooms feels strange. In this process of adaptation to the post-covid era, we still have online classes, although the teachers and the students are aware that they are not the same as in-person classes. Undoubtedly, we have benefited quite a lot from the online education we have been taking part in for the last two years, but what is missing is the in-class collaboration opportunities. According to my pre-service internship observations in a high school, individual activities inevitably dominate the English classrooms by hindering the speaking practices between the students considerably. It would not be wrong to say that those collaboration activities play a huge role in students' development regardless of the subject; they help them exchange ideas and learn from each other and boost their creativity and critical thinking skills.

A potential problem might be that after two years, being in class and having face-to-face education did not bring group work or pair work back, as we still need to protect our social distance. At this point, we have one question: how should we integrate collaborative pair or group work activities into the socially distanced classrooms?

- **Integrating Digital Tools to the classroom**

One of the advantages of online education is the digital tools that we met. Teachers may integrate the digital tools to facilitate active learning and encourage student-student engagement. For example, we can incorporate the collaborative tools that we use in online classes, such as Moodle Discussion, Forums, Google+, Yammer, or Slack, to communicate in the socially distanced classes to deliver documents or work on a project with the team members while keeping our distance. We can also use Google Docs, Slides, and Sheets to work collaboratively, as they allow the students to edit documents in real-time, comment on others' work and present a chat option. Another way of using these digital tools is to bring

peer review back. We can integrate the Google tools mentioned before to provide an environment for students to give feedback to each other in the class.

- **Forming small groups for discussions**

Group discussions can also be integrated by forming small groups. It may not be possible to have 5 students in one group and be sure that they are safe; thus, maybe forming groups of three could be suitable for a safe communication environment. With the masks on, it is hard to hear each other and there may be background noises, therefore, in small groups, it would be easier to talk and listen to each other.



- **Paper-cup Telephone**

Especially in primary and middle school, we can integrate some games that would help teachers to keep students safe and communicative. As children, we all know about Paper-cup telephones. Besides the fun, they actually do work. It can be a great activity to ask students to make their Paper-cup telephones first and then use them in speaking activities; we can make use of them in role-plays, dialogues, and so on.

Resources

Dişlen, G., Ve, Ö., İfadeleri, Ö., & Motivasyon, I. (2013). THE REASONS OF LACK OF MOTIVATION FROM THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS VOICES p.39.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308792361_THE_REASONS_OF_LACK_OF_MOTIVATION_FROM_THE_STUDENTS'_AND_TEACHERS'_VOICES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2h33LnlqR1c>

Tips, suggestions and strategies for the socially distanced classroom:

https://assets.cambridgeenglish.org/schools/Socially-Distanced-Classroom-Tips.pdf?_ga=2.131395270.872140890.1638131613-1550462067.1638131613

Warmer activity booklet:

<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/594825-classroom-warmers-activity-booklet.pdf>

ESL games to play while keeping social distance:

<https://www.twinkl.com.tr/blog/19-esl-games-to-play-while-keeping-social-distance>

Speaking and collaboration activities in a socially distanced primary classroom:

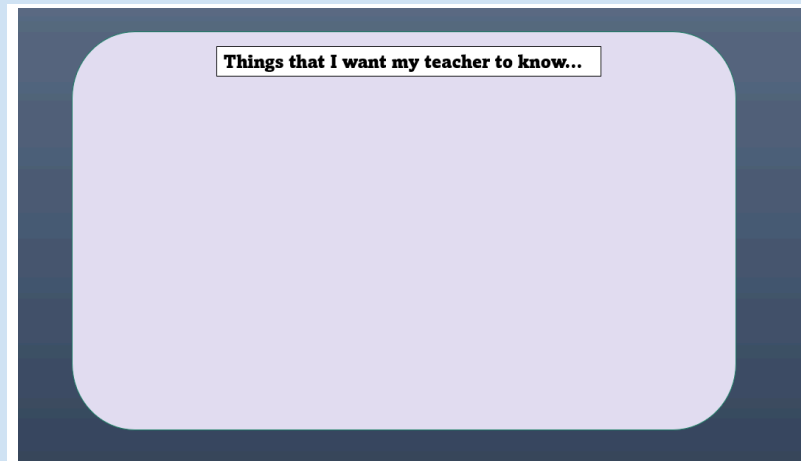
<https://eltlearningjourneys.com/2020/12/14/speaking-and-collaboration-activities-in-a-socially-distanced-primary-classroom/>

Sociocultural and Socioeconomic Differences

To provide a more inclusive environment and enhance the quality of education, dealing with socio-cultural and socioeconomic differences is one of the significant matters to be considered. However, the teachers should be competent enough to deal with such issues to provide the students with a positive learning environment. Actually, there are some basic and simple ways to overcome such cases, which will be explained in this chapter.

To begin with, it should be noted that the fact that the students attend high school solely with their exam grades in Turkey is not their fault, and this is not the correct indication of their real potential. The students in socioeconomically lower situations are not helped in the system, and most of the time, their existence is ignored. Thus, it is of great importance for the teachers and the managers in the schools to welcome all the students equally as the problems that the students have to deal with are unknown, and these, for sure, affect their physical and mental health. Here are some tips for us to overcome the aforementioned problems and widen our vision about how to create more equal and inclusive classes.

First of all, the teachers should spend more time getting to know their students. This can be done by implicit questions and individual meetings, even in a course context. For example, the teachers may ask students to talk about themselves, their interests, likes and dislikes in the class to get to know each other. Then, the teachers should ensure consistent communication. Sharing information between the students and teachers must be done regularly so that the teachers can know if there is something to know. Sometimes the students find it very difficult to easily talk to the teacher. In this situation, it is useful to consider integrating writing in our lessons.



The students may write about what they want their teachers to know about themselves or they may write this anonymously for their friends so that they will feel more secure and a safe place to express themselves.

Additionally, each of the students should be respected and the diversity should be appreciated as long as they do not disrespect others. Turkey is a multicultural and multilingual context where people from different minority groups live together. Also, in recent years, it is home to millions of refugees from different nations. No matter what their language, race and background, the students are integrated into the mainstream education. Unfortunately, the situation causes some dilemmas and problems for all the stakeholders in this aspect. To deal with such issues, it is of great importance for the teachers to prepare and implement lesson plans, materials and activities that embrace the beauty of the richness of cultures and languages. For instance, lessons should include topics and materials that can attract students' attention and that will make them think critically about racism, refugee students, inclusion, impairment, etc. In this regard, the students should be given autonomy and flexibility to an extent that they can express and adapt themselves in the classroom. For instance, they may bring some materials that they think are useful and inclusive. Students with impairment may bring material about successful disabled people or refugee students may introduce their hometown in the class. In this way, the students will feel more comfortable and secure, which will enable the teachers to conduct their courses easily by integrating diversity with their students. This will show that each individual is unique and their existence is important and appreciated. Below, you may learn about a poetry competition named as 'Mother Tongue Other Tongue' which aims to attract attention to diversity and give the students with different languages a chance to work together:

<https://scilt.org.uk/MTOT/tabid/5841/Default.aspx#:~:text=Mother%20Tongue%20Other%20Tongue%20is,poem%20in%20their%20own%20voice>

Additional Resources

<https://drexel.edu/soe/resources/student-teaching/advice/importance-of-cultural-diversity-in-classroom/>

<https://k12teacherstaffdevelopment.com/tlb/how-can-i-reach-different-types-of-learners-in-the-classroom/>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/creating-inclusive-classroom>

<https://engage-education.com/can/blog/top-tips-to-help-teachers-create-a-more-inclusive-classroom/#!>

Illustrations

