(some) Essential Ingredients of a Language Lesson

Dan Bruce | Deputy Director

CENTRE FOR ENGLISH TEACHING

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY
‘My piece of paper says...”

“My understanding of this term is...”

‘I think it’s probably to do with...”

“These terms are probably linked to...”

“I think the session will be about...”
Word cloud for today’s session


The Loop, Recycling, Expansion, Routines.
Desired outcomes (NOT aims)

- to have reflected on current classroom practice
- to have challenged some ingrained norms
- re-ignition of some old (lost?) skills and techniques
- to have provided the impetus for designing your own ‘essential’ list
REFLECTIVE TEACHERS = REFLECTIVE LEARNERS

- “reflection in action – reflection on action”
- “evaluate what’s going on and change tack”
- “make our thinking explicit”
Background

- personal quest for ease and simplicity
- a few years teaching, training and observing
- reading, study and action research
- desire to empower learners to:
  - be noticers – “lexical sponges”
  - be autodidactic – *self-directed learning*
  - take their learning outside the classroom
  - engage in real-world communication
Caveat(s)

- unrealistic for all lessons to contain all ingredients
- ingredients for ALL CONTEXTS
- ideas not overly academic – practicality is key
- my ideas - you may disagree (in which case, I encourage you to make your own list)
Key concept 1

THE LOOP

- Link everything you do in class with your whole week/module/course
- BOOKEND your activities/lessons/weeks/courses
- Always let your students know WHAT you are doing and WHY (make sure you know first!)
- ENGAGE your students - you might genuinely like them!
Key concept 2

Double-loop learning

Challenge norms!

- when a learner is able, having attempted to achieve a goal on different occasions, to modify the goal in the light of experience or possibly even reject the goal. (Argyris: 1978)
Kolb's model works on two levels - a four-stage cycle:

1. **Concrete Experience**
2. **Reflective Observation**
3. **Abstract Conceptualization**
4. **Active Experimentation**

(Kolb: 1984)
Key concept 3

- Revisit the language and activities you do in class (x lots)
- Encourage your students to regularly ‘regurgitate’ lexical items and put them to use
EXPANSION

- Ask yourself – ‘where can I add an extra stage to my lesson plan?”
- Train your students to extend all activities through:
  - Openness to discussion and debate
  - Personalisation: “How does this connect to you?”
  - Challenge: “What can we do next?”
Key concept 5

From **micro** to **macro**:
- activity
- lesson
- week
- course

“Develop a set of reliable classroom routines that students will immediately recognise and which therefore require minimal explanation” (Thornbury: 2010)
Deconstruct/reconstruct – *My mate’s Torana*
Process language – *process vs. end product*
Respond to text/challenge text - *critically*
Written record – *every lesson*
Variety of methodologies – *be conscious*
Classroom setup – *why is it the same?*
Instructions – *verbal and written*
Personalisation – *Lady Di complex*
Written summary – *lesson/week/module/course*
Consistency – *presentation/boardwork/instructions*

Scaffolding – *learning opportunities, not only modelling, supporting and practising interaction*

Lexical ‘show and tell’ - *noticing*

Student-generated warmers – *put them to work*

Variety of colour – *don’t bore me with blue & black*

Student distribution – *confuse them!*

Ownership – *we all need to feel special*

Visual representation of lexis - *wordclouds*
1. With a (new) friend, discuss and complete your own list of ‘essential ingredients’
2. Turn to someone new and compare/discuss your choices
3. Give your completed paper to your presenter so he can collate it
Consolidation

Recycling

Routine Expansion

Double-loop learning

Consistency, Methodologies, Written record, Scaffolding, Activity list, Bookending, Classroom setup, Process language, Colour, Student-generated, Text response, Instructions, Staging, Matrix, Deconstruct/Reconstruct, Noticing, Outcomes, Written summary
Any questions?


Classroom Setup

U-shape  Lecture Style

Café Style  Enemy corners

Back-to-back  Clusters

Methodologies

Test, teach, test  PPP

Tasked-based learning

The communicative approach

DOGME

The Lexical Approach
Beer

VB Little Creatures
Melbourne Bitter Heineken
Guinness Cooper’s

Learners

Proactive Reflective
Dormant Asleep
Noticers Autodidactic
UECA PD Fest – Essential Ingredients of a Language Lesson

Key ideas

The Loop:
- Link everything you do in class with your whole week/module/course
- BOOKEND your lessons
- Always let your students know WHAT you are doing and WHY (make sure you know first!)
- ENGAGE your students - you might genuinely like them

Double-loop learning:
“When a learner is able, having attempted to achieve a goal on different occasions, to modify the goal in the light of experience or possibly even reject the goal.” (Argyris: 1978)

Kolb’s model (1984) works on two levels - a four-stage cycle:
1. Concrete Experience
2. Reflective Observation
3. Abstract Conceptualization
4. Active Experimentation

Recycling:
- Revisit the language and activities you do in class (x lots)
- Encourage your students to regularly ‘regurgitate’ lexical items

Expansion
- Ask yourself – ‘where can I add an extra stage to my lesson plan?’
- Train your students to extend all activities through:
  1. Openness to discussion and debate
  2. Personalisation: “How does this connect to you?”
  3. Challenging them: “What can we do next?”

Routines
From micro to macro:
- activity
- lesson
- week
- course

“Develop a set of reliable classroom routines that students will immediately recognise and which therefore require minimal explanation” (Thornbury: 2010)

A random assortment of other ingredients:
- Deconstruct/reconstruct – My mate’s Torana
- Process language – process vs. end product
- Respond to text/challenge text - critically
- Written record – every lesson
- Variety of methodologies – be conscious
- Classroom setup – why is it the same?
- Instructions – verbal and written
- Personalisation – Lady Di complex
- Written summary – lesson/week/module/course
A(nother) random assortment of ingredients:

- Consistency – presentation/boardwork/instructions
- Scaffolding – learning opportunities, not only modelling, supporting and practising interaction
- Lexical 'show and tell' - noticing
- Student-generated warmers – put them to work
- Variety of colour – don’t bore me with blue & black
- Student distribution – confuse them!
- Ownership – we all need to feel special
- Visual representation of lexis – wordclouds

Your own list of Essential Ingredients

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<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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