(some) Essential Ingredients of a Language Lesson

Dan Bruce │Deputy Director

CENTRE FOR ENGLISH TEACHING

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

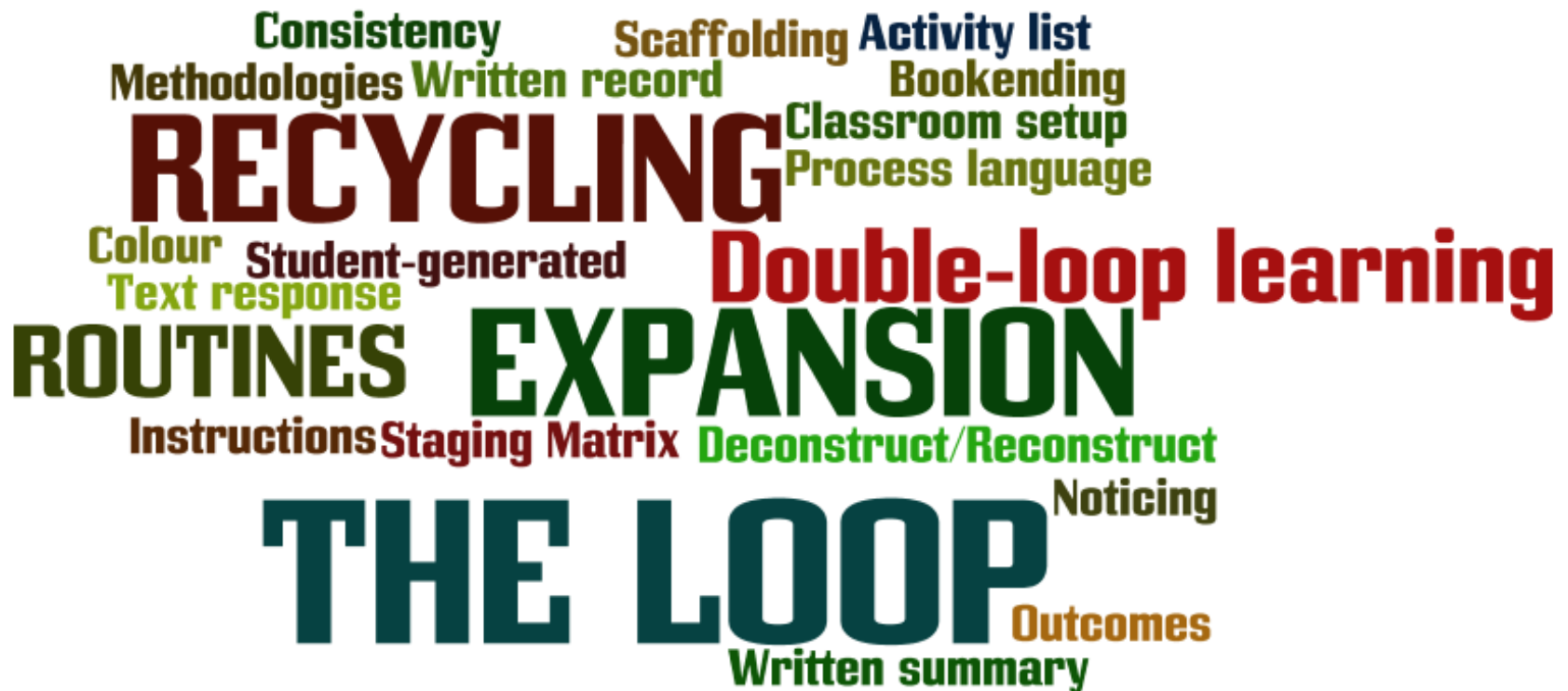*'My piece of paper says..."*

"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..."

- 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"*

- 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

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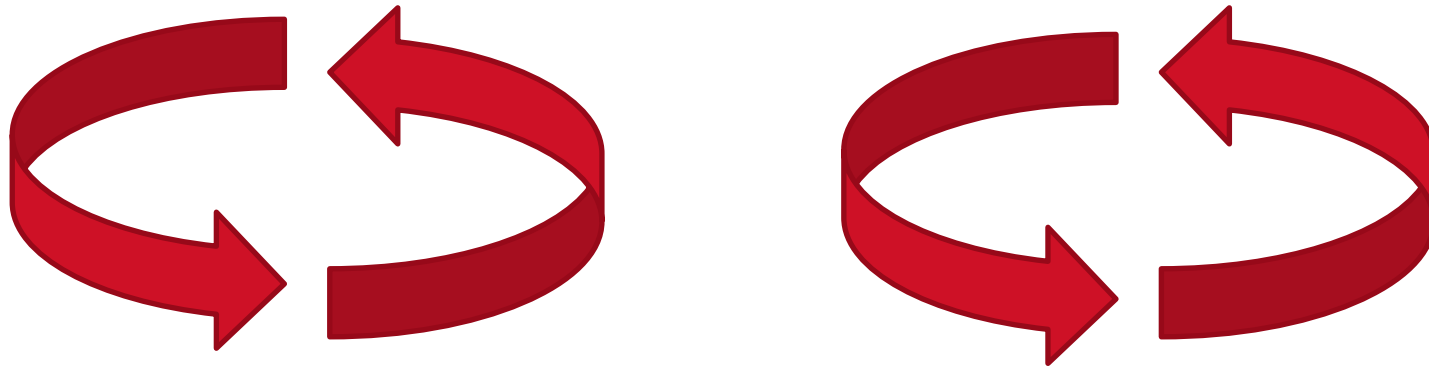
THE LOOP
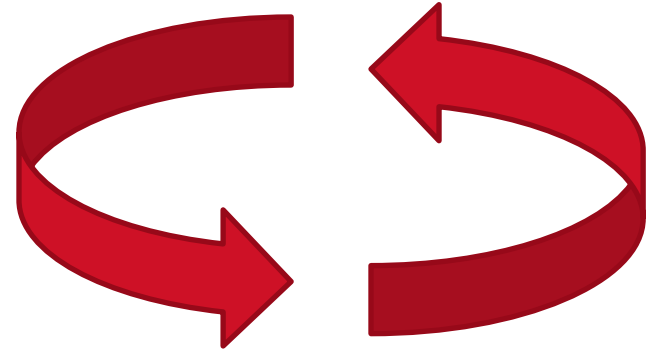
- Link **everything** you do in class with your whole week/module/course
- BOOKEND your activities/lessons/weeks/courses
- Always let your students know WHAT you are doing and WHY (make sure you know first!)
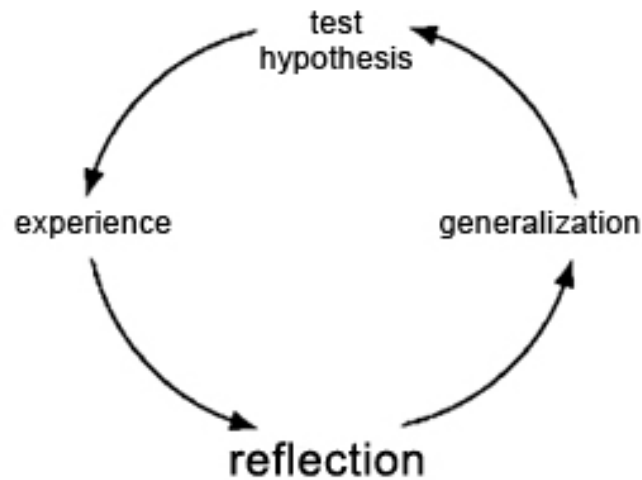- ENGAGE your students - you might genuinely like them!
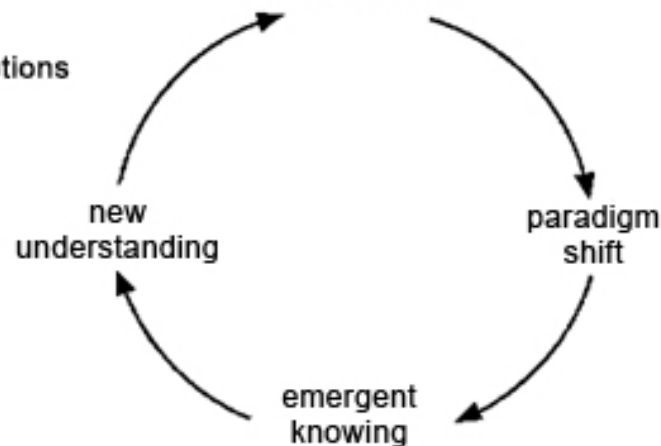
Double-loop learning

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 learning cycle depicting "instrumental" learning

"Double-loop" learning can bring fundamental shifts in understanding and involve emotions

test hypothesis

experience

generalization

reflection

new understanding

paradigm shift

emergent knowing

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)

RECYCLINGCYCLINGCLING
RECYCLINGNGCLING
RECYCLING RECYCLING
RECYCLING RECYCLING

- 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?"

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)

- 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

Argyris, C., & Schön, D. (1978) *Organisational learning: A theory of action perspective*, Reading, Mass: Addison Wesley

Argyris, C. and Schön, D. (1996) *Organisational learning II: Theory, method and practice*, Reading, Mass: Addison Wesley

Senge, P. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline. The art and practice of the learning organization*, London: Random House

Thornbury, S. *An A-Z of ELT (blog)* http://scottthornbury.wordpress.com/

Thornbury, S (2002). *How to Teach Vocabulary,* London: Longman

Lewis, M (1997). *Implementing the Lexical Approach,* London, LTP

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

Ingredient	Characteristics
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	