



Eternal Mingle

INTRO

This is an excellent all-purpose communicative activity for big ESL classes. It's effective because it just about ensures a high level of student participation. It also lowers inhibition levels, encourages student centered correction and frees the teacher to observe and field questions from students. The possible variations are endless. It can be used as an icebreaker, for drills, or as an initiator of free conversation.

STEP 1

Hand out a slip of paper to each student.

STEP 2

Delegate a word, phrase, a question beginning, a concept, a topic, or a grammar component to each student. This depends on your lesson focus. Explain to the students that they are to write a sentence or question including the word, phrase etc. To take this step further you can also tell the students to write an answer/response to their own question/sentence on the BACK of the slip of paper

STEP 3

Model an interaction with a student. Supposing you are practicing questions, ask a student your question then listen to the response and reply if necessary. Then get the student to ask you his/her question. After the exchange switch papers and randomly choose a new partner for a new exchange. Because you are "eternally" switching papers and partners the exercise is "endless". (I've often had talkative classes take the exercise and run with it for an hour or so... totally oblivious to the teacher's presence).

EXAMPLES OF VARIATIONS

TEACHING PRESENT SIMPLE (Questions)

Delegate question beginnings such as What do...? Where does...? Why do...? Do you...? Does? Why don't you...? Is there....? Are we....? Is today.....? etc.

TEACHING MODALS (Questions)

Why must....? Where do you have to...? Do you need to? What should you....? Why mustn't.....? Should people...? etc.

TEACHING "WISH" (SENTENCES)

Tell everyone to write a wish on the front of the paper and a reason on the for their wish on the BACK. So when the students talk Student A might say " I wish I had a car" and Student B could ask "Why don't you have a car?" or "Why do you wish you had a car?"

DRILL FOR INDIRECT REQUESTS

Delegate the 3 most commonly used verbs for requests(to be, to do and modals) around the class. Say to the first student "verb to be", to the second student "verb to do", to the third student "modal", to the fourth student "verb to be", to the fifth student "verb to do" and so on. The students must then write a direct question using their verb type on the FRONT of the slip of paper and the indirect conversion of that question on the BACK of the paper. The students can then walk around reading direct questions and getting their partners to respond with the indirect question.