

CAPE Alumni Internet Connection: English Teacher Talk

Dear CAPE Alumni and Friends:

Aloha former CAPE workshop participants! We hope all is well with you and your families and that your classes are going well. There is no doubt that all of you are doing fun and creative things in your classrooms. Are your students speaking a lot of English?

This is the first edition of a short newsletter called “Teacher Talk”. We have started this newsletter as a follow-up to your CAPE workshop experience so we can maintain ties with CAPE alumni and those who are interested in professional development in English teaching. We hope this will increase our bond and aloha among former participants. We hope the information in these newsletters will help you review what you know and deepen your understanding of issues of interest in the ESL field. We will update you on recent developments and provide a forum for us to discuss issues of interest and share our thoughts on them. This CAPE internet connection and dialogue for English teachers will include situations teachers encounter in classroom management/teaching, recent issues and developments, and anything else that might interest you. We welcome your comments and questions. Please feel free to e-mail us with issues that you would like the forum to discuss or situations that you encounter in your classrooms. The forum will work best if you tell us your interests and concerns, so drop us a line at cape@capaloha.org.

Classroom Speech

This first section is aimed at beginning teachers or teachers who worry if they are saying things correctly or want to add variety to their classroom speech. Based on comments of past participants and non-native teachers in the University of Hawaii SLS graduate program we have noticed that teacher talk is an area many non-native teachers focus on. This section will give you ways to say things in certain classroom contexts. Much of this you probably know, but it might give you ideas on how to vary your speech in the classroom.

For this week’s topic, we will start with one of the first things every teacher does in the classroom: checking attendance.

I know that before my classes begin, everybody is noisy. The students are getting out books and talking to each other. Some ways to get their attention and signal that class is about to begin are to say:

Right!

Now!

Okay!

Quiet, now, please!

Is everyone ready?

Good morning class. Let’s begin.

Note: Many of these phrases can actually be used at any time you are transitioning between lessons or the class is off task.

Next, you want to let them know that you are taking attendance. You can combine any phrase on the right side with any phrase on the left for lots of variety.

I'm going to	call the roll.
I'll	take roll.
Listen while I	call your names.
	see if you are all here.

Let's see	who's absent.
	who is absent.
	if everyone's here.
	if anyone's missing.

If you are in a hurry, or have a large class, you can ask:

Is anybody absent?
Is everybody here?
Who's missing?

Sometimes you want to know if your students know where an absent student is. In a beginning class or in a non-formal situation you could ask:

Where's Hyun Jung?
Where are Higa and Aki?
Have you seen Mi-Hyun today?

Or, you might want to be a bit more formal or give some more advanced structures by saying:

Does anyone know	where	Lee is?
Does anybody know		Ho and sun are?
Who knows		
Can anyone tell me	when	Yoshi will be back?

Next class you have, try say at least one thing different. Even if you know all of the vocabulary, try to use one phrase you don't ever use. This will make your classroom routines more interesting for you and challenge your students too.

Teaching Tip: This is a common game with suggestions on how to adapt for different levels and combine with grammar practice.

Warm-up game: Vocabulary

Materials: 6-8 objects or pictures that represent vocabulary students have learned recently (or recycled vocabulary from previous lessons). A cloth or big sheet of paper to hide objects with.

Procedure: Tell students they are going to play a memory game. Place objects on table or pictures on board (you can also use an OHP transparency). Give the students 20 seconds to look at the objects.

Version 1: Beginners: Have students write/say all the objects they can remember. (“What have you written?”, “What can you remember”)

Version 2: Adjective-noun practice: Make pictures the same object but with differences (e.g. pictures of cars or toy cars that are green and large, red and sporty etc.) Have students describe the objects in as much detail as they can.

Version 3: Containers or count/non-count. (e.g. a box of cereal, a carton of milk etc. or some flour, a few pencils, some milk etc.). Students write down the container name or “some” or “a few”

Version 4: Prepositions/present perfect: Move objects. Ask students “What have I done?” Students write/tell you where you have moved the objects. (e.g. “You have put the scissors next to the pencil box.”)

Version 5: Challenge yourself. Try to adapt this game to whatever vocabulary, grammar you are doing write now. If you are teaching advanced grammar/vocabulary ask yourself if this game has to be played with pictures. Could you replace pictures with words you want students to spell correctly or vocabulary words the students have to remember and give the opposite of? Be creative!

Note: For maximum language practice, if students can write, I would have them write the objects and compare lists with their partners before going over it as a class.

Food for thought:

Here are several things I have been reflecting on in the past few weeks. I welcome your thoughts on the matter.

In her book Critical Pedagogy, Joan Wink says, “Relearning takes place when our students teach us all those things we didn’t learn in teacher education” (24). This resonates with me too. No matter how much we try to prepare for classroom experiences, there are things we can never understand until we are there in the classroom. Also, I think it reminds us to keep an open mind and learn from our students. Each group of students is different and if we pay attention, we will learn what works for each group of students. If we remain open to learning from students, it makes our lives easier because we can work with them instead of trying to impose a rigid system of learning/discipline on them based on the way we as educators think learning “should” happen. What do you think? How can we as teachers remain open to learning from our students? What kind of things can



we learn from them? How can we structure our classrooms to provide an environment conducive to co-learning between teacher and student?

Well everyone, that's all for now. Have a great week! Please take the time to give us the addresses of anyone else you think might be interested in receiving this newsletter and don't forget to write us with any comments you might have.

With warm Aloha,

Sarah Toohey (CAPE Editor)

Jai-Ho Yoo (President)