

The 80/20 sheet for CELTA-style TESL

- **Introducing language**
 - Elicit the target language: Don't give students the language on a plate. See if they know it first. I usually 'hum' the word. For example, show a flashcard of a potato. *What's this?* Wait. *It's a mm-mm-mm* (po-ta-to). Wait and look quizzical. Repeat. Write *p* on board. Then first syllable, then second syllable, then the word. Give the students plenty of time. Sit with awkward silences. The example above probably takes 25-30 seconds. Less if you're almost certain they don't know it.
 - Always hum the correct number of syllables, with the correct tone and stress.
 - Introduce functional language in context of a sentence or dialogue. Example: Write *What shall we do tonight? ___ go to the cinema!* Say the sentence, using 'mm' to replace target language (Let's). Use for words that don't stand alone so well, such as prepositions, idioms and conjunctions.
 - When planning a lesson, go through listening and reading texts, and list the target language. This might be a central grammatical structure or set of connected vocabulary (e.g. different illnesses), plus probably some extra new words that just happen to be there (a lesson on requests might contain 'cab' or 'wheelchair'). Pre-introduce all new words before the exercises.
 - Introduce all the words together, probably after a warmer activity and before the main activities.
- **Meaning, form, pronunciation (MFP)**
 - Follow MFP for all vocabulary you introduce. First, establish meaning for all words. Next, establish grammar labels for all words. Lastly, drill pronunciation for all words.
 - Meaning: See above. Follow with content checking questions (CCQs). CCQs test the students' comprehension, and check possible areas for confusion. For example: *costume*. You've elicited the word from a clever student using the context of an actor on a stage. However, some students might think *costume* has the same meaning as *outfit* or *shirt*. CCQs: *Are you wearing costumes now? When do you wear costumes?* Think of CCQs before the lesson when possible. When a student explains the meaning of the word (not you), they speak at the language level of the other students.
 - Form: elicit grammar labels all the words from the students (e.g. noun, preposition, past tense).
 - Pronunciation: Say the word and have the students repeat it together once or twice, then individually. If a student gets it wrong, motion for the previous student to repeat, then motion for the wrong student to retry. Do this twice maximum per student.
- **Introducing activities**
 - Chesting: Don't hand out a worksheet before explaining the activity. The students will ignore you and look at the cool worksheet. Hold the worksheet on your chest. Explain the activity pointing to the worksheet. Give exact time limits, but adjust when activity is in flow as needed.
 - Instruction checking questions (ICQs): ICQs ask the students to explain the task back at you. When possible, they should give a full explanation. For beginners, use questions such as *Are we writing? Are we talking? How many minutes?* Hand out sheet after ICQs.
- **Repeat** when needed. **Repeat**, don't rephrase. Say it exactly the same again. The students are processing.
- After individual tasks, have students compare their answers in pairs before open class feedback.
- **Don't echo:** Very common habit. Student provides an example sentence: *Let's go to the cinema*. Teacher says *Very good. Let's go to the cinema*. By repeating the sentence, you are telling the student her English isn't good enough to communicate to the class, or that she can whisper because you'll repeat everything for her. If you want to correct pronunciation, probably do this separately, or elicit from the student.
- **Grade your praise:** *okay, good, very good, excellent*. Don't give out 'excellent's lightly. Don't praise a student who got something wrong just to be polite. Avoid 'no' and 'wrong', we're vulnerable in a new language.
- **Talk as little as is necessary:** students will have more listening energy, so will you. I occasionally lead a class of 9-year olds for 15 minutes at a time without saying a single word, and they really engage. Don't interrupt.
- **Body language:** confident, leadership gestures and voice. Upward, open palms for directing. NEVER point.
- **Accuracy and fluency:** speaking freely and confidently is important. Make space for grammar to slip.
- **Try kinaesthetic activities:** most adults and kids learn best when moving: rearrange word slips, act, draw, etc.
- **Make use of color** on the board. Use different, consistent colors to tick answers, write corrections, form etc.
- **Make it personal:** if you can relate the language to your life or the students' lives, do it.
- **Delayed corrections:** make notes of mistakes during fluency practice. Present at end and elicit corrections.