



SAUNDERS Matt

Faculty: Center for Language Education

Subjects: Pre-Intermediate English and Upper-Intermediate English.

3 Tips:

1. The importance of “why”
2. Creating a class “map”
3. Engaging with feedback from students

Q: Currently, you are teaching two English Language classes (Upper-Intermediate and Pre-Intermediate). Among these classes, which subject and which aspect of that subject do you plan for the most?

A: In my opinion, all English classes take the same amount of effort to prepare for, but the real difference is the level of the students. To prepare for Pre-Intermediate classes, I focus on how to create a lesson that is

there is a lot to prepare for in terms of class content, but the key is to make sure that the students can follow the lesson.

Q: In your classes, what do you do in order to increase the quality of students' learning?

A: In terms of the quality of education, students need to have a “map” for the class. This “map” signifies the past, present, and future of the class, as in where we have been as a class,

easy-to-understand yet challenging for the students. For the Upper Intermediate class, I focus more on the challenge. My main efforts go into making lesson plans corresponding to the English abilities of the students. It's important to remember that English classes don't only focus on one aspect of the language, but rather train the students in all language skills: i.e., reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and listening. Therefore, as a language professor,

where we are currently, and where we are heading in the future. The map can be visualized in the form of a schedule. It includes the overall course content along with a daily class agenda and goals, which allow students to look back on what they have learned in the course and review by themselves. It also allows them to see what they are currently working on as well as what they should look forward to in the course. This map helps construct the overall goal of the class and each lesson, and enables

students to position themselves in the map to check how far they have come and set individual goals for future. Therefore, I spend quite a bit of time in class reviewing what we have covered in previous classes, followed by the core of what we should accomplish now, and then looking ahead as a preview to what is coming.

Q: In your classes, what do you do to increase students' motivation for learning, especially for students who

who begin the course with a negative outlook? Some students, including me, have a lack of motivation to attend compulsory language classes - what do you do in this case?

A: On the one hand, the quality of education needs to be high, and on the other hand, the motivation of the students also needs to be high. Therefore, for the students to maintain their motivation, it is important for them to follow the map and to know why they are doing what they are doing.

If they don't know the "why," students tend to lose their motivation. Therefore, it's important for students to set short-term goals, such as: "Why am I doing this reading?" rather than simply making broader statements such as: "I am learning English so I can work abroad." Setting short-term goals and positioning oneself in the class map are key factors in maintaining student motivation.

Q: What about students who begin the course with high motivation, but their motivation dwindles down mid-semester? How do you maintain students' motivation for learning?

A: I think that students are good at distinguishing between "busy work" and "useful work." In my classes, I make sure the work I give to students doesn't feel like busywork, but rather provides new challenges for the students. Repetitive work or "busy work" can become a catalyst for students to lose motivation.

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday	
8	11/30 Writing Q2 Timed writing practice / diagnostic Consulting on Q1: grade tracker	12/1 Listening Unlock Unit 5 (Sports) p. 102-105 <i>H/W: Unit 5 vocabulary list</i>	12/3 Writing & Listening Unlock Unit 5 (Sports) p. 106-109 Writing Workshop 6: Reflection <i>H/W: Unlock p. 110-112</i>	12/4 Listening Check H/W and review: p. 110-112 Unlock Unit 5 (Sports) p. 113-115 Progress Test Skills Practice	
9	12/7 Writing & Speaking Writing Workshop 7: Direct Comparisons Unlock Unit 5 (Sports) p. 116-118 Progress Test Skills Practice	12/8 Speaking & Review Unlock Unit 5 (Sports) p. 119-121 Unit 5 Objectives Review p. 123 Pair-Discussion Test practice (Unit 5) <i>H/W: Unit 5 Unlock Online W.B.</i>	12/10 Writing & Listening Writing Workshop 8: Comparing ideas Unlock Unit 6 (Business) p. 124-127 <i>H/W: Unit 6 vocabulary list</i>	12/11 Writing & Listening Writing Workshop 9: Paragraph review Unlock Unit 6 p. 128-131 <i>H/W: Paragraph outlines, Unlock 132-136</i>	12/12 Saturday GOAL lecture (Monday schedule)
10	12/14 Listening Check H/W and review: p. 132-136 Unlock Unit 6 (Business) p. 137-139	12/15 Speaking & Critical Thinking Unlock Unit 6 (Business) p. 140-141 Progress Test Skills Practice Writing: feedback on outlines <i>H/W: Paragraph first draft</i>	12/17 Speaking & Review Unlock Unit 6 (Business) p. 142-143 Progress Test Skills Practice Pair-Discussion Test practice (Unit 6) <i>H/W: Unit 6 Unlock Online W.B.</i>	12/18 Speaking & Review Unit 6 Presentations p. 144 Unit 6 Objectives Review p. 145 <i>Due: Paragraph first submission to Turnitin</i>	

↑ Professor Sanders and his class map

It is important to show the value of each part of the course. It is also important to show students that we are in this together, and receiving student feedback also helps me to improve the lesson plan.

Q: This year, classes have been held online from the Spring Semester. What sorts of changes have you made for your online classes? Also, which format do you prefer more, online or in person?

A: I personally believe that language classes are largely based on communication. Zoom may be one way to facilitate communication over long distances, but it cannot replace the contact you would have in a classroom, especially for language classes. In my class, I like to check my surroundings to see how the students are reacting to the lesson. Seeing their expressions adds to the students catching what is being taught. However, on Zoom, it is very difficult to monitor students' faces and

expressions as not everyone has their video on or the video is not centered on their faces. This feature makes it tricky to get automatic feedback from the students, and I therefore prefer on-campus classes in terms of proper communication and feedback. However, Zoom classes have also opened doors to new technology, such as online games which wouldn't have been possible in on-campus classes but are easily accessible during Zoom classes, especially in the breakout rooms.

expressions as not everyone has their video on or the video is not centered on their faces. This feature makes it tricky to get automatic feedback from the students, and I therefore prefer on-campus classes in terms of proper communication and feedback. However, Zoom classes have also opened doors to new technology, such as online games which wouldn't have been possible in on-campus classes but are easily accessible during Zoom classes, especially in the breakout rooms.

The main difference between my online classes and on-campus classes is that I didn't rely on PowerPoint slides for my on-campus classes. I might have one or two slides showing the outline for the class during on-campus classes. But on Zoom, I need a PowerPoint for every class, partly for my own notes and more importantly to show the students what we are doing in class. Therefore, the most important thing during the "Zoom Semester" has been to take things slow so that the students don't miss crucial

information.

Q: When improving the contents of your classes, what kinds of steps do you take towards improvement?

A: I am one of the coordinators of our English Program, so I get the opportunity to listen to input from other professors which helps us develop materials to share. So the feedback I get from teachers as well as students are some of the steps I take when improving the contents of my classes. During



↑ Professor Saunders with his students during on-campus classes

on-campus classes, I used an application called Socrative for quick feedback from students every other class.

Socrative is a free application which includes educational activities, quizzes, and reporting. The reporting function includes reviewing students' understanding of the class lessons. This application provides students with multiple choice options to convey how they feel about the lesson and provide their feedback towards the lesson. Socrative enables the instructor to



visualize the student's understanding in order to determine the next step in lesson planning. Also, the comment section on the survey is very useful, as students make comments such as: "This part was difficult but useful."

Q: What do you expect from the students who take your classes?

A: The first thing that I expect from my students is that they are respectful to their classmates. If they are respectful, students will worry less about making mistakes and start speaking English with their classmates even if it is unnatural for them. I also want my students to show me their best effort, whether their level is very high or very low. For high-level students, they may show their best effort through active

participation or using high-level vocabulary or grammar. For lower-level students, simply a willingness to talk or pay attention in class is very important, and I realize that each student's best is individual.

The other thing that I expect from my students is to seek help, whether from me, their fellow classmates, or going to SALC. APU has provided several resources on campus for students to seek help and receive opportunities to practice English.

Q: Since your first semester in APU, how has your teaching methods changed?

A: My first semester was in 2008. One thing which jumps out right away from that semester was that I was more concerned with getting students “over the line,” as in doing whatever I could to get students to receive 60% or higher or have them submit essays and complete assignments, but it didn’t take long for me to realize that the journey matters more than the destination, and each and

every part of the journey is critical for students to reach their final destination. For the bigger picture, it is important that students improve their language skills in all of the areas little by little.

Also, another thing I learned from the trial-and-error method was that if I played too many games, students’ respect for the curriculum tended to dwindle a little. Sometimes students lose the connection between the game and the actual course work. Therefore, in the case of games, less is more.

Interviewer Impressions

This was my first-time interviewing a professor. Although I haven’t personally participated in Professor Saunders’ classes, as an English TA in my first semester I had the opportunity to observe an Upper Intermediate English class, and, like many other language classes in APU, the class was very well-structured with an active learning environment. After this interview with Professor Saunders, I realized how much work and effort is needed from both the professor and student to create such an environment for the class. For example, I remember the learning applications “Kahoot” and “Quizlet” being really popular among the students, so professors being open and engaging with new technology, as well as students being receptive to it, are some of the efforts which contribute to this environment.

What is [Q]?



At APU there are many professors who put together wonderful classes, and if we could get to know how these classes are planned, it would contribute to the improvement of other professors’ classes. For that purpose, we have begun doing interviews in order to learn about class planning. These articles have been entitled [Q], comprising a variety of meanings such as: increasing the [Q]uality of classes, answering [Q]uestions to increase quality, and forming a [Q]ueue, or line, of class improvements. We would be very happy if these articles could contribute to the [Q]uest of APU professors’ class quality improvement.