

Maximising Teacher Language

Webinar handout

by Katy Kelly

Here are four ideas for you to try in your classes to help you maximise your teacher language. You can then use the reflection tasks as a tool for your continuous professional development.

Idea 1. Songs or chants

Select, or better still, create a song or chant to use in your class as part of your routine. Look for and highlight the transferable language.

Here is the example from our webinar.

I want to know, how you're today.
She wants to know how we're today
I'm feeling good and ready to play
She's feeling good and ready to play
How are you – let's show and share
Feeling funny like a teddy bear.
How are you - let's show and share
Feeling happy – hands in the air.
How are you – let's show and share
Feeling tired – where's my chair

Try it with your class. After class, complete the reflection questions below.

How did your learners respond?

Were you able to use the transferable language successfully at another point in your lessons?

Idea 2. Introducing new language and concepts.

Look at the next topic you will teach.

Choose one of the areas from the table. These are areas of teacher language that we looked at in our webinar. Script what you will say and try it with your class.

Presenting
Eliciting
Conveying meaning
Checking meaning – CCQs
Prompting

After class, complete the reflection questions below.

How did your learners respond?

What went well?

What would you do differently if you did it again?

Idea 3. Instructions

Choose an activity or game you are going to use with your class. Script the instructions.

Points to remember

Wait until everyone is listening

Sequential

Imperatives & accessible language

Here & now

Checked

After class, complete the reflection questions below.

Did you find scripting your instructions helpful?

Were you better able to deliver the task instructions?

Is there anything you would do differently?

Idea 4. Feedback

Here is an example of a feedback slip you can use for learners' writing tasks.

What was interesting	Some things to think about	For next time	A question
<i>I really like the description of the food at the birthday part. I would love to try it.</i>	<i>Check your prepositions – underlined in the text.</i>	<i>Try to find some different adjectives to use.</i>	<i>Did your friend like the present you gave her?</i>

Appreciation

Evaluation

Coaching

Content Interest

Use feedback slips with your class. After class, complete the reflection questions below.

How easy did you find using the feedback slips? Are there any challenges or difficulties with using feedback slips? What are the benefits of using feedback slips?
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Some final tips and suggestions

- Focus on one area of your teacher language at a time – you can't do everything all at once.
- Use a highlighter on your lesson plans to mark the points in a lesson where your language is important and can positively affect the overall learning.
- Ask a colleague to come to your class and listen to your teacher language. They can focus on one of the four areas from our webinar and then give you feedback.
- Alternatively, use your phone to audio record a part of lesson, then listen back to what you said and reflect.
- Share what you try out in class with your colleagues and your reflections. Support and encourage other teachers in your school to try and focus on their teacher language too. Collaborating and sharing ideas and experiences is a great way to develop your teaching.

Further reading:

Denton P. (2007). *The power of our words : teacher language that helps children learn* (Second). Northeast Foundation for Children.

Watch the recording of Katy Kelly's webinar here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/motivating-our-learners-mini-event>