

## Jim Scrivener's Teacher Tips

### Bringing dialogues alive

You can find short dialogues in many coursebooks. How can you exploit these scripts and get them to come alive?

#### Speedy dictation

- Tell the learners that you will read a short dialogue to them – only once. They must listen without writing – but as soon as the dialogue is finished they should write down whatever they can remember.
- When individuals have finished writing they get together in small groups and see if they can work out the original conversation.
- They can compare what they wrote with the original (text or on tape).

#### Start orally - rather than with the printed text

- Draw a picture on the board showing the conversation's location and with "speech bubbles" over people's heads showing pictures of what they are talking about (e.g. a question mark and a cup of tea)
- Ask the learners to guess what they are saying. Correct any English errors but don't say if the learners are right in their guesses. Write up their words and phrases.
- When you have collected a lot of phrases, read the dialogue aloud yourself (maybe stand in a different position for each speaker) – or ask two learners to read it aloud.
- The learners listen and check if their predictions were correct.
- Learners then try to remember any other phrases they heard.

#### Moving jigsaws

- *This idea is suitable for short dialogues (3 – 8 lines) in classrooms where there is space for learners to move around. Choose dialogues that total the same number of lines as there are learners.*
- Write the dialogue(s) on paper, with space between the lines. There should be one line for each learner.
- Cut the lines up and randomly distribute one to each person. Learners walk around, read their line out to other people and see if they can work out what the original order was. When a group has found a complete dialogue, they call out "snap".
- Everyone listens while they read their conversation, then the others decide if it's good or not. If it's OK, they sit down. If not they start searching again.
- You could make it much more challenging by cutting up dialogues so that the pieces are shorter phrases (rather than whole sentences)

#### Dialogue refills

- Once a dialogue has been studied, choose one of the adjectives in it and ask the learners if they can think of a different word that is possible in that place (it may change the meaning) e.g. learners might suggest that "red"

or “delicious” could replace “large” in the sentence “I had a large apple after supper.”

- Tell the class that, just like ink in pens, dialogues get old and need refills. Erase about a quarter of the words of the dialogue on the board (or hand out a photocopy). (Erase key words like nouns, verbs, adjectives etc). Learners must now try to “refill” the dialogue by putting new words into the old spaces. The dialogue can completely change its meaning but it must make sense and be good English!
- Learners may like to read out or act their dialogues for each other.