

Ideas *for* Group Facilitators

Activities for Beginner English Language Learners:

- 1. What beginner learners need to know first is how to introduce themselves and greet others.**
- 2. The natural progression from there is the use of the verb “to be” (I am from...; He is from..., etc.)**

Then you’ll progress on to grammar: nouns, pronouns, possessive worksheets. (Examples: My country, your name, his/her family and etc.)

- 3. Don’t make assumptions about what your students know. Assume they do not know.**

For example practice the verb to be, you ask them what nationalities they are, only to find out they don’t know how to say nationalities in English. Countries and nationalities should be taught first, and then practiced with the verb “to be”.

4. Beginners will tell you they don't speak English – till the very end of the course. What they're thinking is that they don't speak English fluently or like you, for example. But make sure they're aware of what they can do.

If on the first day of class they've learned to greet each other in English, and you can end the lesson by celebrating this, “Congratulations! You can now introduce yourself and greet each other in English”. Take the focus away from what they can't do and focus on what they can do instead.

5. Beginners may not have enough knowledge to understand explanations, definitions, i.e. anything you describe with words. Instead, use their senses to maximize learning. The easiest to use with beginners are visual aids like flashcards including plenty of hand gestures, as well as real life objects. Don't forget to use things they can smell and taste, too!

- 6. Minimize the beginners reading of dialogues and conversations, and act out the situations, instead. Have your students to reply to a question “How are you?” Do you have them read this short exchange first or just act it out directly? It’s a lot better to simply show them how to reply. This goes for most of the expressions and functions they will have to learn.**

- 7. It is essential to review what the beginners have previously learned and it’s a great idea to start each lesson with a brief review. But you can also reuse previously taught language points and introduce them into a new context.**

- 8. Keep It Real with the beginners. It doesn’t mean they can’t handle real life situations. You can still teach in context, and provide as many examples of real life situations and real props as you can. Even through real maps, catalogues and brochures are filled with vocabulary they won’t understand, but it is important to help them deal with these types of things. The important thing is that they learn to obtain what they need from it.**

9. By the time the beginners finish their course, they will probably still not feel confident enough to say they “speak” English. That’s OK.

Providing the beginners with some specific examples of what they can do now: go shopping by themselves, ask for assistance and order food in a restaurant. You can tell them they are your heroes for learning so much and overcoming their language barriers.

Reference material:

Pesce Claudia From ESL Zero to Hero - How to Teach Absolute Beginners [Journal].

Obtain books and other practical activities at link
(<https://store.busyteacher.org/products/entire-busyteacher-library>)

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