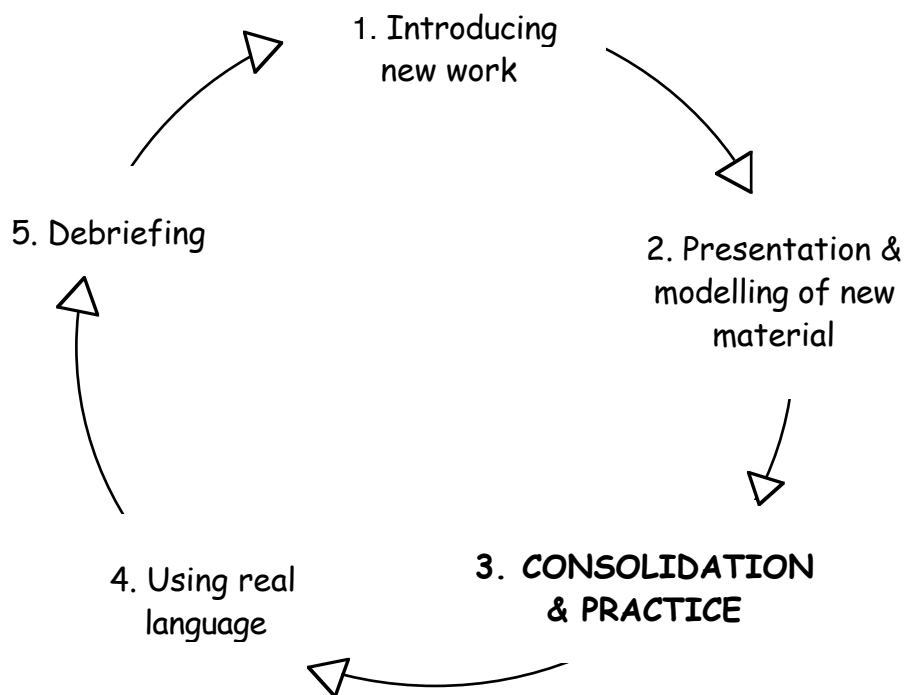


Working Together for Inclusion in Modern Languages

A POSSIBLE TEACHING CYCLE



1. INTRODUCTION

Clarify expectations

unit plan

lesson plan

outcomes: what you will be able to do

Recall prior learning

what do you know already that we can use again now?

Prediction

what sort of things will we need to learn in order to achieve the outcomes?

AifL: Sharing learning goals

2. PRESENTATION

Presentation of new material

small chunks (vocabulary items)

larger chunks (sentence patterns)

Modelling

guided practice in using new and recycled material

provide conceptual and multi-sensory 'pegs' to improve retention at later stages

establish access to reference material (notes/posters etc.)

AifL: effective questioning to ensure accuracy of learning

3. CONSOLIDATION

'Practice language'

pupils manipulate vocabulary and structures under controlled conditions in order to internalise them (eg games, software)

opportunities for clarification and revision

amalgamating new material with existing language store

building familiarity and confidence

AifL: Individual and groupwork, use of self and peer assessment

4. USING REAL LANGUAGE

Experiencing real language

listening, reading

Using language for real

speaking, writing

opportunities for extending and personalising own language store

opportunities for creative use of language and producing a decent end product, performance or event

where possible, establishing international communication for real purposes

AifL: Group work, peer support and assessment
Tutor feedback and marking strategies

5. DEBRIEFING

Review

what have we learned?

what can we do?

in what other contexts could we use this?

Evaluation

what did we do well?

what could we have done better?

Planning

what would help us to remember what we have learned?

AifL: Reflecting on learning

A POSSIBLE TEACHING CYCLE: NOTES

Of these five stages, Stages 2 and 4 usually receive the most attention. The Assessment is for Learning programme (AifL) helps teachers to develop Stages 1 and 5. The stage most often ignored or glossed over is Stage 3, yet this is arguably the most important.

This is the point at which pupils need to become familiar with the new knowledge recently encountered, to experiment with new structures, to see how these combine with previously learned material, and to transfer all of that from working memory to long term storage so that they can recall it as required.

A tall order!

What happens if this stage is omitted? Then pupils are required to move to Stage 4 insecure in their knowledge of recently taught language and without having had a chance to practice manipulating the new language elements for themselves or to install them in long term memory. Result: lack of confidence, increased likelihood of failure, feelings of reluctance and demotivation and, in extreme cases, avoidance strategies.

If Stage 4 is well managed, with plenty of opportunities for games and game-like activities which allow pupils to manipulate language for themselves in non-threatening pair and group situations, and which allow for randomised repetition (less boring than repeat-after-me!) then they will be ready to move on confidently to the textual activities, with a much increased chance of success.

The reason most often given for underplaying Stage 3 is that there isn't time. But schools that have taken the time to develop Stage 3 have found that improved confidence and motivation at Stage 4 have actually saved time and led to more satisfying achievement.

QUESTION...

How well does the text book you are currently using lend itself to the stages described? In some cases the answer to this is 'not very well'. Some text books are crammed with reading, writing, listening and speaking activities, but don't do the 'what you need to learn' bits very well. There can be confusion about the precise purpose of some of the activities or whether they are intended for practice (Stage 3) or performance (Stage 4). Over-reliance by the teacher on such a textbook can lead to lack of confidence, success and motivation on the part of the learners.

It might be interesting to analyse a unit of your current text book and see how well it reflects your own teaching philosophy, perhaps using the 5 stages described above or a similar cycle of your own.