

Using pair work: Secondary English

English (with Hindi)

Commentary:

In this secondary English class, a teacher uses a speaking and writing activity in which her students work in pairs. Notice how carefully she sets this up, as the class is not used to working in this way. She uses English to communicate and body language to help her students understand.

Teacher: So, I will divide you in pairs. You are a pair, you a pair, you pair and you both are pair. You pair, you, you both are pair, you are pair, you are pair and in the pairs you are A, you B, you A, B.

Commentary:

She labels the students in each pair A or B to make it easier to allocate roles.

Teacher: A, B. A and B, A and B, A and B. A, Sushil, A and you B. A, B, A, B, A and B. All right, so who are the students who are A? Hands down and who are the B?

Commentary:

The teacher first reads the passage aloud to model clear pronunciation and familiarise her students with the text.

Teacher: Look at the paragraph number three. I am going to read that paragraph and all of you listen very carefully. 'If you were with me, I would love to talk to you about this beautiful world of ours, about flowers and trees and birds and animals and stars and mountains'. Now, which students which are the A? Read this passage and who are the B students, they will write this. Okay? For this activity you have three minutes.

Student 1: If you were

Student 2: Mountains and glacier and all the wonderful things that surround us in this world.

Student 3: And.

Student 4: And.

Student 3: Yes.

Commentary:

Pair work gives the teacher the chance to monitor progress by observing and listening to student talk.

Student 5: And mountains and glaciers and all the other wonderful things that surround us in this world. And mountains and glaciers and all the other wonderful things that surround us in this world.

Commentary:

Next, the teacher uses English to ask her students to change roles. She then checks their understanding in Hindi.

Teacher: Now all of you we will exchange your role. Okay? You have to exchange your role means? कोई बताएगा exchange करना रोल को? क्या मतलब?

Student 6: मैम हमने इनको किताब दे दिया ये मैम बोलेंगी हम लिखेंगे.

Teacher: Alright. अभी जो हम रोल कर रहे थे जो A रोल कर रहा था वो रोल अब क्या होगा? B करेगा और जो B कर रहे थे वो A करेगा. जब हम exchange करेंगे रोल तो Who will write A or B? Who will write?

Students: A.

Teacher: A will write, good and who will read the paragraph A or B?

Students: B.

Teacher: B, yes.

Commentary:

Pair work is especially useful in language classes as it's a comfortable way for students to practise speaking and listening, while building their confidence. What activities can you think of to increase opportunities for your students to use English?