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COMMUNICATION PRACTICE ACTIVITY SAMPLER

The following list of communication practice activities offers a variety of ideas for beginner to advanced students. Ideas must always be adapted to suit students' speaking abilities and needs. These are just ideas—springboards to creativity. Some are listed as advanced activities, but with adaptation they could possibly be used with lower levels.

1. Pantomime

Level: Beginner—pairs, small groups, whole class

Material: pencils and paper

Procedure: Ask a student to draw a picture and pantomime the action, such as sweeping or crying. The class should guess the action. Pantomime is good practice for vocabulary.

2. Describe a picture

Level: Beginner—pairs, small groups

Materials: pictures with action and/or story

Procedure: Show a picture that has a story or lots of activity. Let each student describe the picture. A more challenging activity is to show the picture, then remove it from view and ask students to describe what they remember about it. Then look at the picture again and describe what they forgot.

3. Where do I put it?

Level: Beginner—small groups, whole class

Materials: pencils and paper with grids (grids may be already printed on paper or drawn by students)

Procedure: Give each student a grid divided into 6, 9, or 12 sections with instructions to place, or draw, a small picture, letter, or number in one of the sections—for example, top right section. This activity is effective for reviewing new words and learning directions.

4. Add-on

Level: Beginner—small groups

Materials: none

Procedure: The teacher models the procedure. A sample sentence pattern should be written on the board.

Student 1: I'm going to the store to buy a dress.

Student 2: I'm going to the store to buy a dress and a coat.

Student 3: I'm going to the store to buy a dress, a coat, and a blouse.

Give each student an opportunity to add on. Then start again by saying, "I'm going to the store to buy a blue dress."

5. Take a walk

Level: Beginner—small groups, whole class

Materials: none

Procedure: Go for a walk and let the students describe the surroundings.

6. Make a sentence and ask a question

Level: Beginner—pairs

Materials: index cards

Procedure: Sample sentence pattern should be written on the board. Make two sets of index cards—one for the first blank in the sentence and one for the second blank in the sentence. Student A draws one word from each pile and makes a sentence following the sentence pattern on the board. Student B asks a question that can be answered by the sentence Student A created.

Example:

Sentence pattern: personal pronouns, locations

_____ is at the_____.

Student A draws the words he and school. He creates the sentence, He is at the school."

Student B says, Where is he? or Who is at the school?"

Here are a few possibilities:

- Occupations
- Community locations
- Pronouns (possessive/personal)
- Prepositions of place
- Question words (can work in pairs for scoring)
- Clothing
- Food
- Verbs
- Color

Sample sentence patterns:

Pronouns or name and verbs

_____ is _____

_____ likes to _____.

Food, clothes, personal pronouns, and prepositions of place (on, in, etc.)

_____ is _____ the table.

Clothes and possessive pronouns (mine, his, hers, etc.)

That _____ is _____.

Personal pronoun, color, and clothes

_____ am wearing a _____.

7. House furnishings and prepositions of location

Level: Beginner—pairs

Materials: pictures of a room—two pictures alike for each pair of students

Procedure: One student asks where questions—“Where is the lamp? Where is the pillow?”

The other student answers, using appropriate prepositions of location—on, next to, under, between, etc.

8. True or false?

Level: Beginner—pairs, small groups, whole class

Materials: assorted pictures

Procedure: Select one picture and make statements about it. Students indicate whether the statements are true or false.

Variation: Ask *yes* and *no* questions instead of true or false. For example: *Is the ball blue?*

9. Draw and describe your neighborhood

Level: Beginner and low intermediate—small groups

Materials: pencil and paper

Procedure: Ask each student to draw his or her neighborhood. They should draw their homes, nearby shops and houses, and stick figures to represent neighbors. Draw your neighborhood to demonstrate what they should do.

After students sketch their neighborhoods, ask students to describe the people and places.

10. Use the telephone

Level: Beginner and low intermediate—pairs

Materials: none

Procedure: Model and practice several common sentences associated with the intended phone call. Students should practice asking their partner to repeat a sentence or speak more slowly, if necessary. Students should sit back-to-back.

Some possible phone call conversations:

- Take a message for your husband or wife
- Check on a bus, airline, or movie schedule
- Excuse yourself for dialing a wrong number
- Plan to meet a friend for lunch or invite a friend to dinner
- Call a doctor’s or teacher’s office and make an appointment
- Call your teacher and report that you will be absent from class

- Order food to be delivered
- Report a fire or auto accident

11. How did you feel?

Level: High beginner through advanced—pairs, small groups

Materials: pictures depicting various emotions

Procedure: Divide students into groups of three or four. Give each group pictures of people expressing emotions. Have students in each group select a picture and describe to the other group members a time when they experienced that emotion.

12. What are they saying?

Level: High beginner and intermediate—pairs

Materials: one picture of people conversing—one per pair

Procedure: Each pair creates a dialog that is related to the action or event illustrated in the picture. Combine pairs and they share the dialog they created.

13. Introduce yourself

Level: High beginner, intermediate, and advanced—pairs

Materials: none

Procedure: Have students introduce themselves by telling where they were and what they were doing in a specific month or year.

14. Introduce your classmate

Level: High beginner, intermediate, and advanced—pairs

Material: none

Procedure: Group students in pairs. Instruct them to get to know their partner's names, countries, favorite foods, interesting things about their families, favorite sports, or hobbies. Combine pairs and ask each student to introduce his or her partner.

15. We're in order

Level: High beginner, intermediate, and advanced—small groups, whole class

Materials: none

Procedure: Have the class, or teams, line up alphabetically in order of last names, or native countries, months in which they were born, or chronologically in order of birthdays or years in the United States. After they line up, instruct them to tell their names, countries, etc.

16. In the United States/Canada

Level: High beginner, intermediate, and advanced—small groups, whole class

Materials: map of the United States/Canada

Procedure: Show a map of the United States. Review the names of each state. Ask students to tell which states they would like to visit or have visited and why.

17. Create a story

Level: High beginner through advanced—pairs, small groups

Materials: different colored index cards or paper and pencils

Procedure: Give students four different colored index cards. Tell students to write a noun on one color paper, verb on another, adjective on another, and an adverb on the last. Tell them which color is for which word. Make a pile of each color with words face down. Let each student take one of each color and create a story using the words.

18. What's in a bag?

Level: High beginner and intermediate — small groups, whole class

Materials: bag, items to place in the bag

Procedure: Place an item in a bag. Let students ask one question at a time to guess what it is. Questions may be answered only with yes or no.

Variation: instead of using an item, a student could draw a picture of an object and have others guess what it is.

19. Twenty questions

Level: Beginner and intermediate — pairs

Materials: pairs of pictures of different animals, or two pictures from any same category

Procedure: Students work in pairs without showing each other their pictures. Students take turns asking yes and no questions, and guessing what is in their partner's picture.

20. Who has my match?

Level: Beginner and intermediate — whole class

Materials: pairs of pictures that are not identical but have some similarities

Procedure: Give each student a picture. Students walk about to locate another person who has a picture that is similar to their own. Students discuss what their pictures have in common.