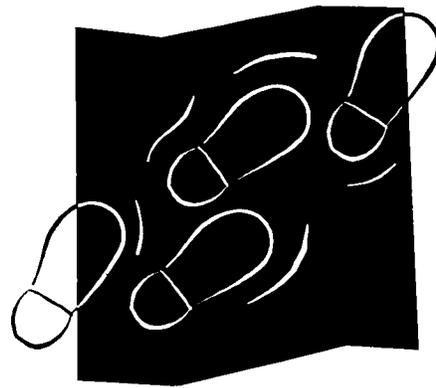


Intensive English as a Second Language

A Mini-guide



First Steps in Intensive ESL

**A handbook to guide teachers of Intensive English as a second language
in Quebec elementary schools**

June 2003



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PREFACE

As the popularity of Intensive models increases across the province and in light of the Reform in Education, the need to provide guidelines for integrating elements of the new curriculum has become necessary. A Mini-guide for Intensive ESL is intended for teachers taking their first steps in the Intensive classroom.

This guide offers a variety of paths that will allow teachers to discover or rediscover the Intensive ESL classroom. The pedagogical intent of all intensive ESL instruction must heighten the relevance of the educational project of a school by integrating the values it promotes. Within the guide, you will find the contributions of experienced teachers which include their most successful planning and teaching strategies, classroom settings, and more. The ideas and activities presented are flexible and applicable to all models of Intensive. Teachers can adapt them to their individual situations and tailor the teaching/learning content to their students' needs and to the model chosen.

The first section provides information about the orientations of the Quebec Education Program. The second deals with enriching the environment for optimal language learning. Important elements for getting the students involved are presented in the third section, while teaching, learning and evaluating are dealt with in section four. What guide would be complete without an inventory of the tools of the trade? They are found in section five. We thought it was necessary to include a last section on other considerations relevant to the Intensive ESL classroom. As this is by no means an exhaustive exploration of what goes on in Intensive, it is our hope that you come away enriched and ready to add your own style to our suggestions.

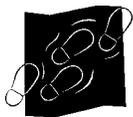
Flory Corcos, C. s. Marie-Victorin
Carolyn Faust, C. s. des Samares
Voula Plagakis, C. s. de la Seigneurie-des-Milles-Îles

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all those who answered our questionnaire about teaching in the Intensive classroom; your suggestions and input have added colour to this guide.

The authors

This project was made possible by a grant from the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec and Canadian Heritage in conjunction with SPEAQ (La Société pour la promotion de l'enseignement de l'anglais, langue seconde, au Québec).



AN INTRODUCTION TO INTENSIVE ESL

The Quebec Education Program for English as a second language is the basis for all intensive instruction in Quebec. Intensive ESL at the elementary level provides a unique experience through which the students acquire a solid foundation for the development of their competencies in English, and the ability to see and interpret the world in a different way.

The three characteristics that define Intensive ESL are:

- the increased amount of time allotted to the teaching of English (40% or more of the total teaching time)
- the concentration of the teaching time
- the enrichment of the MEQ elementary ESL program

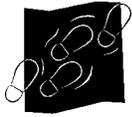
(The New Implementation Guide, p. 9)

The joy of teaching Intensive ESL may be tempered by the apprehension generated when the teacher starts thinking about the teaching time to cover. The flow of questions begins: What am I going to...? Is there a program? Do you know someone who...? Are there any books that...? After all these questions, one real-

izes that it all comes down to planning and finding resources.

The reality is that ESL specialists become Intensive ESL *homeroom* teachers and this requires some adjustment. Certainly the planning of learning situations takes on a new scope as the luxury of more class time is now provided to achieve the goals of language learning. The specific “goal of an Intensive English instruction model is to make students functional in the second language in everyday life situations...the increase and concentration of time will allow students to achieve a higher level of competency in the second language” (The New Implementation Guide, p. 9).

We believe that Intensive ESL is an exciting and successful model for the efficient learning of English. The Intensive ESL classroom is an environment rich in opportunities to bring the world to the learner’s doorstep. This mini-guide is offered in the hope that it will promote a smooth start in a new ESL adventure, and to encourage teachers to share the exciting discoveries made through classroom experiences.



ORIENTATIONS OF THE ESL PROGRAM

The Quebec Education Program (QEP) is defined by its competency-based approach. It is meant to promote the development of cross-curricular and subject-specific competencies in authentic learning situations for which the broad areas of learning provide a context. The QEP emphasizes the development of communicative competencies beyond the sole acquisition of vocabulary and structures; students are therefore propelled to use their growing knowledge and skills to find an appropriate answer to a question or the solution to a problem. This new approach demonstrates the change of focus in the teaching/learning continuum which places the students at the centre of their own learning.

Reading the introductory chapters of the Quebec Education Program and understanding its fundamental aspects will facilitate the pragmatic exploitation of the ESL curriculum. It will provide insight on the emphasis placed on integrated learning “in order to help students perceive the connections between their various learnings” (QEP, p.5).

The increased timeframe in the Intensive classroom enriches the teaching and learning. What a great opportunity to show students how their learnings are integrated under the roof of ESL! The introduction of two-year cycles along with the collaboration of same-cycle teachers will help to fulfil the different needs of the students.



ENRICHING THE ENVIRONMENT

Even experienced teachers get the first-day jitters, so imagine how the students feel when they enter the Intensive classroom. It is important to establish English as the language of communication from the very start; the students expect it and deserve it. It's as if the students were travelling to an English-speaking location, where they would be faced with the reality of listening to and trying to speak a language they are not completely familiar with.

Overcoming the difficulties of language learning is part of the learning process. It makes the students more adept learners and prepares them for the challenges to come. Therefore, language learning strategies presented in the ESL program must be explicitly taught to enable students to develop the tools they need to discover the English-speaking world around them.

Developing the unique characteristics of the Intensive classroom is vital for increasing the level of language communication. The students should see and feel that this classroom is different from other classrooms. The following section includes some practical ways in which enriching the environment can enhance learning and contribute to the unique character of the Intensive classroom.

A special place

“... ESL learning requires a rich and stimulating linguistic and cultural environment where English is the language of communication.”

(Programme de formation de l'école québécoise, English as a Second Language, p. 98).

Students are about to embark on an exciting learning journey. It is the teacher's responsibility to make it as pleasant and engaging as possible by creating an environment where learners can function successfully. A teacher's personal approach to teaching and learning has a significant impact on building class spirit. Simple things like a joke, a smile, a personal slice of life, an enthusiastic attitude will be fruitful and reward-

ing. Students will feel more secure in class if they are given encouragement. This can be done briefly without interrupting the flow of the class activity.

When entering the classroom, the students should see signs of the language they will be practising. Posters and illustrations with captions in English, everyday expressions, learning strategies, illustrations of team work will certainly arouse their curiosity and interest and provide support for learning. Changing the display of posters or moving them around from time to time is also recommended to maintain an on-going relevance to the class activities.

Physical arrangement

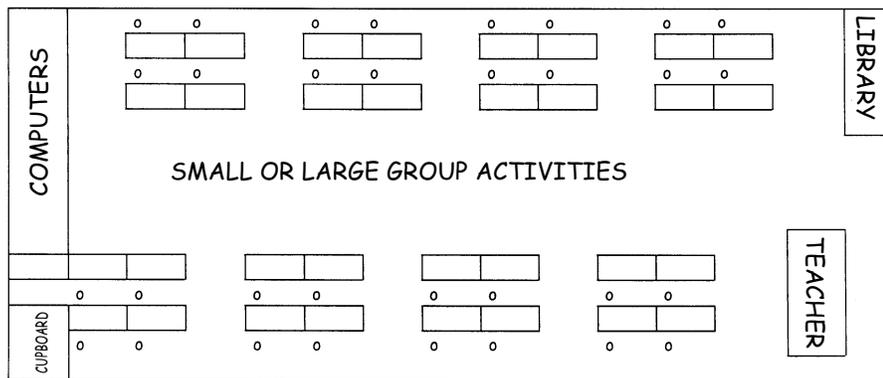
The physical arrangement of the classroom also helps to create an atmosphere conducive to the use of English at all times. The Intensive ESL classroom should offer an ideal environment for students' interactive and cooperative work.

Some elements of the English culture may be displayed around the room to show the students the similarities and differences with their own culture. Video store posters of current movies, ads from newspapers, magazines, comic books, boardgames are just a few examples of the paraphernalia that can enhance the classroom atmosphere. An area should be left for students to display their own work.

In order to promote oral interaction, the classroom setting should allow for different groupings of students. For example, the diagram below illustrates how the groupings can facilitate pair work or group work with a minimum of movement. The desks are placed in two sets of two along each side of the room. In all, there are four sets of four desks on each side of the room with the teacher's desk to one side. In the middle is a large rectangular space used for small or large group activities. This particular setting is ideal for less autonomous students who may be off-task when the desks are placed in islands of four. In turn, this setting accommodates the shy students in that they have the

option to work in their pair or as a group.

Classroom Setting Example



English-only zone

The Intensive English classroom should be considered an English-only zone from the very start. All school personnel should be informed of this fact since they will be greeted by “Hello, come on in” when they knock on the door. If the person is willing to try speaking English, this will surely encourage the students. In the case where someone is unable to get the message across in English or feels more comfortable in French, the teacher and students must be understanding because tolerance is an important value to teach.

Concerning the English-only rule, we found some teachers who speak only English from the very start, others who speak French only in the morning of the first day and still others who use mostly English but explain the school rules in French. Students have acquired some functional language in their previous ESL classes, although perhaps not enough to get them through a whole day in English. For this reason, it is quite natural for the students to express themselves in their mother tongue and they can be given some latitude during the first week.

In order for the students to believe that English can be spoken in the classroom from day one, all activities must be presented in such a way that the language necessary to accomplish the tasks is given to them (displayed on the board or posters, modelled by the teacher, practised several times as a whole group, etc). This empowers the students to use English, and there is less of a need for them to revert to French. A wel-

come sign in English can be posted on the classroom door or a “magic line” may be drawn or taped on the floor of the doorway to make a clear statement of the uniqueness of the class.

The challenge for both students and teachers is to limit the spontaneous utterances in French. One way is to have the students ask: “May I speak French, please?” before doing so. However, the teacher, being the language model in the classroom, should be speaking English at all times with few exceptions. For example, if an urgent need arises to address a student

or students in French, this should be done in a neutral zone or by using “time-outs”. One teacher devised a technique to facilitate quick interventions by placing a hula-hoop on the floor and designating it a French-speaking space within the English-speaking classroom. Others draw a semi-circle around the door and reduce its size gradually. Care should be taken to prevent an overuse of these tricks as students develop their oral competency in English.

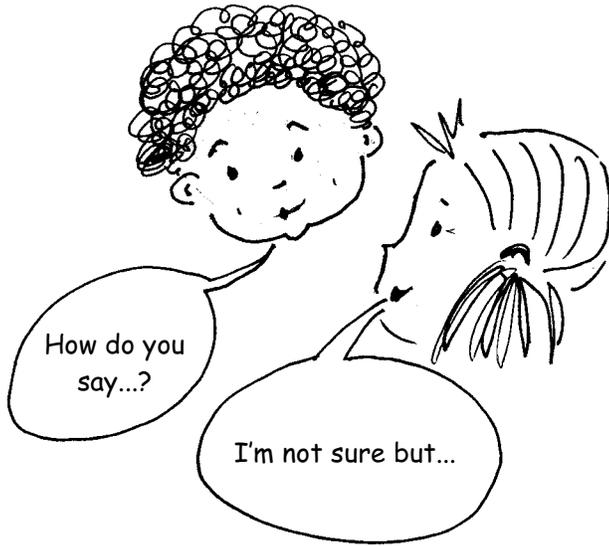
Comfort zone

Although we insist on creating an English-speaking environment, every effort should be made to reduce the anxiety the students may experience at the start. For this reason, a comfort zone can be created by incorporating the ideas previously mentioned, and by including a time to reflect, in French, on how the students feel about this new challenge. Their feelings need to be acknowledged as they push themselves to use English. The fears of those who think they are not doing as well as others need to be calmed as well. This reflection will enable students to renew their commitment, to push back their own personal limits and to curb their desire to compare themselves to others around them. A suggested time for this type of reflection, is every second day or so, the first week and then at the end of the next two weeks.

One teacher suggested an idea to ease frustrations in the first weeks: each student has an envelope in his or her name in which other students can deposit messages of encouragement in French. A specific time is

set aside to hand out the messages. This can be done at the beginning and can be continued later as a fun activity except that the messages are in English. By the end of the first month, the students are more at ease and less frustrated while communicating in English only.

Risk-taking

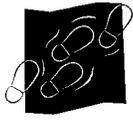


Remember also, that the more active the students are in the learning process, the more exposure to the target language they get, the more likely they are to take risks and interact in English.

Risk-taking as a language-learning strategy is extremely beneficial to second language learners. As students are encouraged and taught to take risks, they learn to accept errors as part of the learning process. Slowly but steadily, students will push their limits further and communicate in English even though they risk making mistakes. As this happens, students rapidly gain ownership of the language.

To encourage students to take risks, to speak English at all times, some teachers develop a reward system. Regardless of the method chosen, setting class goals and discussing the challenges of communicating in English, during time-outs, will help create a sense of community where students support each other while they gain in confidence.

Frequent reminders from the teacher may be necessary at the beginning. Before long, most students will start to recognize the benefits of the successful strategies they are using.



ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

Class rules, chores and routines are a constant in every class. They are collective as well as individual and serve as a means of establishing a sense of belonging. Below are some examples for the smooth functioning of the Intensive ESL class.

Class rules and agreements

By the time the students get to the intensive classroom, they are already familiar with codes of conduct and classroom rules. Establishing class rules from the very start is essential, but teachers may wish to add class agreements that reflect the values we want to instil in our students. They may be expressed in statements such as: *We agree to show respect, we agree to be responsible, we agree to show appreciation, we agree to participate* etc.. Action words with illustrations will facilitate comprehension of each value. Requiring students to sign the class agreements poster will encourage personal involvement especially if the concrete actions or behaviours associated with these values are discussed and perhaps reflected upon.

The rules and agreements can be decided upon jointly and may change as the need arises but they should always be displayed in clear view of everyone and a copy should be given to each student. Creating the class rules with the students is a good opportunity to foster ownership and belonging. Remember, it is better to have few rules and adhere to them rather than have many and not be able to apply them.

Classroom goals

A common classroom goal is one way for the group to collectively take control of their learning. The teacher may suggest a general goal for the whole session and the class may choose weekly goals. A general goal could be: *We are here to learn as much English as possible; We communicate in English at all times; We encourage each other and share our ideas, etc..*

The weekly goals can range from: *I will encourage a classmate to take risks; I will be proud to share my successes with my classmates; I will try to speak or*

listen to English at home, etc.. Don't forget to display the goals in a visible area and refer to them regularly to ensure that the class is on the right track. You could even create a chant, a rhyme or a cheer and have everyone say it as a reminder and for encouragement.

Personal goals

In conjunction with the classroom goals, students should work on personal goals which may be written in their agendas or in a self-evaluation section of their personal portfolios at the beginning of every week. These goals may range from: *I will remember to call my partner on time; I will stop comparing my English abilities to others around me; I will check what I write more carefully; I will ask for help when I don't understand; I will be patient with myself when I make mistakes, etc..* These personal goals are important as they give the teacher insight into the problem areas and help create differentiated learning situations according to learner needs. The teacher circulates and checks the goals perhaps putting a sticker beside it to provide encouragement and to indicate that he or she has read the goal. This is a wonderful opportunity for one-on-one praise and words of guidance from the teacher and a great way to start the week. Students are encouraged to voice their satisfaction with the progress they are making and their resolve to improve in spite of setbacks.



Classroom routines

Establishing a community of learners implies finding a place for everyone within the classroom. Classroom routines are actions that the students perform on a daily basis. The nature of the routines may vary: for example, filling out the daily calendar, being in charge of the portfolios, cleaning the board, collecting and distributing materials, taking attendance, taking lunch orders (for schools with a cafeteria), watering the plants, recycling, writing the homework on the blackboard, etc. These are chores or tasks that the students may take turns accomplishing while using some related language.

Other routines are more language-centred i.e. involve a broader use of English: for example, question period, journal writing, show and tell, the morning weather report, correction of homework, TV show report, events in the news, silent reading period, working on an assignment individually or with a partner, changing cooperative team roles, etc.

Homework

The amount and the frequency of homework depend on the intensive model selected in the school. If the model chosen is 5 months/5 months, most teachers recommend giving homework every day of the week except Friday. An average of 1.5 hours a night is appropriate. Another option is a weekly schedule of homework from Wednesday to Wednesday thus allowing students to catch up or get ahead during the weekend. Other models will require consultation with the homeroom teacher to schedule homework jointly.

Here is an example of a daily homework schedule (three assignments):

- watching TV and/or reading
- working on a project and/or calling a telephone partner*
- reviewing and/or studying

* Please keep in mind that you will need parental approval for a telephone chain.

Homework does not have to be the same for everyone. It could be a task that needs improvement or completion. Some students may require more time to ac-

complish tasks while others need to be given more challenging activities.

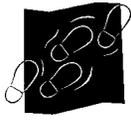
It is strongly advised to avoid giving monotonous and mechanical exercises or drills for homework. Instead, we recommend long and short-term assignments such as research for a project, reading for a book report, a TV show report, journal writing, etc. Another example may be to set up a student telephone chain. The teacher starts the chain by giving a message to a student who must call another student and repeat the message. This student calls another student, and so on. The following day, the last student to receive the message (the chain may have been broken) repeats it to the class. Another example may be to watch a TV program or the weather forecast for discussion time the next day.

Homework should be part of the learning situations and contribute to the development of cross-curricular and subject-specific competencies. Here are a few golden rules to keep in mind for an effective use of homework:

- instructions for the assignment are easy to understand
- homework has a purpose and is interesting to do
- time allotted is appropriate
- teacher and/or peers give feedback

Homework should be as authentic as possible. It should not be something new or something that can frustrate the students. Some parents will comment they are unable to help their child with their homework because they do not speak English. Remind them that the best help a parent can offer is encouragement. The child can even teach a parent how to say or write something. By doing this, the child's learning is reinforced, the parent feels involved in the process and the teacher does not end up with work done by the parents.

If a student brings back an assignment that appears to have been written by a parent, it may be necessary to call or send a note (in French) to the parent explaining the purpose of homework.



TEACHING / LEARNING / EVALUATING

Lesson planning and evaluation

Planning for the Intensive classroom takes on a new meaning for teachers accustomed to one or two periods of ESL a week. At last you have the luxury of time for the in-depth development of the competencies.

Teachers often begin their planning outside the classroom by gathering ideas while shopping in the grocery store or reading an article in a magazine. These ideas float around until teachers sit down and fit the pieces together to create complex learning situations. The students are then called upon, as a community of learners, to find appropriate answers to questions, to solve problems or to attain goals. Whether teachers are inspired by the surprise toy found in a cereal box or a song on the radio, their inspiration must be anchored in the broad areas of learning.

Lesson planning is essential to efficient and effective learning and teaching. When planning the learning situation, keep in mind that teaching, learning and evaluating are an integral part of the learning process. Evaluation does not take a back seat to the other aspects of the learning situation. Its role is to support the learning so that students may adjust their strategies while they are learning, and not only at the end. It is essential that students be made aware of how and when they will be evaluated. They may even be brought to discover the evaluation criteria on their own. Beyond evaluation and observation done by the teacher, integrated evaluation must allow students to be agents of their own progress through self-reflection, peer and self-evaluation.

The following outline summarizes some important points to consider when planning a learning and evaluation situation.

Planning a Learning and Evaluation Situation

Choose learning situation

- Title
- Description
- Duration

Consider:

Are the students solving a problem, answering a question, or attaining a goal that is complex and promotes the development of competencies?

Is this learning situation realistic?

Is it based on students' interest?

Are there cultural references/products?

Decide on the pedagogical intentions

- Broad areas of learning
- Choose broad area of learning
- Choose focus of development
- Cross-curricular competencies
- Choose cross-curricular competency/competencies
- Choose evaluation criteria
- ESL competencies
- Choose ESL competencies
- Choose evaluation criteria
- Choose essential knowledge (functional language, strategies, language conventions)

Evaluation

- Choose how and when evaluation will take place

Consider:

Are the criteria known to the students?

How will the criteria be presented?

Are the chosen criteria adapted to the pedagogical intention?

Are the criteria adapted to the students (level, cycle)

Are the tools appropriate?

Is the evaluation ongoing and interactive?

Classroom activity

- Preparing the tasks

Consider:

Organization

Activation of prior knowledge

Relevance of tasks to problem, question or goal

- Carrying out the tasks

Consider:

Construction of new knowledge

Modelling/guided practice/autonomous practice

Pedagogical approaches (different rates and styles of learning)

Guiding students through process

Explicitly showing how strategies help complete task

Ongoing evaluation/adjustment

Personalized outcomes

- Assimilation/transfer of learning

Consider:

Reflecting on the learning (students and teacher)

Reinvestment/transfer of new learning to similar and different contexts

At the end of the day and of the learning situation, take time to reflect on what the students have learned, the adjustments that are needed, and what an appropriate follow-up would be. As a consequence of this reflection, homework assignments may be planned based on individual or collective needs. This type of reflection also permits the planning of future learning and evaluation situations.

The Framework for the Evaluation of Learning at the Preschool and Elementary Levels provides details and examples on the integrated role of evaluation as well as guidelines for formal and informal communication to parents. This document should be consulted for further information on this topic.

Portfolios

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits processes, strategies, progress, and achievement over an extended period of time. Each entry in the portfolio includes a student self-assessment/reflection that is based on specific criteria. In other words, students are collecting, selecting and reflecting on what is included.

There are three basic types of portfolios:

- The working portfolio helps the students collect and comment on their work; it contains numerous pieces of individual or group work related to the development of the ESL and the cross-curricular competencies.

- The presentation portfolio requires the students to choose their best work to present to their parents and eventually to keep for high school. In so doing, the students exercise their critical judgement as they discuss the reasons for their selections at the same time as they assess their learning process and progress. The teacher may have input in some of the portfolio entries.
- The evaluation portfolio is somewhat similar to the presentation portfolio in the choice of pieces to include. However, the focus is more on the student's achievement and performance. This is ultimately used by the teacher for pedagogical purposes (remediation) and communication to the parents.

Students should be able to examine their work, explain their choices, generate criteria for good work, and establish their own guidelines for future assignments or tasks. In all cases, the portfolios should reflect the students' actual day-to-day learning activities.

“By examining the students' portfolios, teachers can evaluate students' strengths and weaknesses. This enables the teacher to talk regularly to the students about the competencies they are developing, their interests, and their attitude toward activities...These meetings are essential because, with the help of the teacher, stu-

dents can assess the level they have reached. As part of preparing for promotion to the next cycle, students could be asked to choose pieces documenting their level of competency” (Evaluation of Learning at the Pre-school and Elementary Levels, A Framework, MEQ, 2002 p.31).

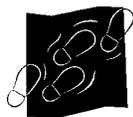


The following table shows the relationship between various aspects of evaluation and the characteristics of the portfolio.

Evaluation and the Portfolio

PURPOSE	Evaluation	The Portfolio
	Is integrated into the dynamics of student learning	Involves students in their learning (as a tool for reflection)
Support for Learning	Must encourage students to play an active role in their evaluation activities and thus increase their accountability	<p>Allows students to increase their ability to self-evaluate</p> <p>Teaches students to make choices</p> <p>Allows students to reflect on their procedures, strategies and accomplishments so they can become better learners</p>
	Must be carried out in a way that respects diversity and difference and must seek ways to ensure the success of all students	<p>Promotes feedback during the learning process, particularly during individual conferences</p> <p>Encourages students to understand themselves better and to reflect on their strengths, needs, errors, interests, challenges, objectives, etc.</p>
	Involves the collaboration of all interested parties, while taking into account their respective legal responsibilities	Encourages interactive processes among students, teachers and parents
	Constitutes a process that involves making a judgment about the development of com-	<p>Shows students' progress because it tracks performance over time</p> <p>Is used to assess competencies developed by students</p>

Adapted from: *Utilisation du portfolio au primaire, 1^{er} cycle*, sous-comité régional de la Montérégie, June 2001 (Evaluation of Learning at the Preschool and Elementary Levels, MEQ, 2002, p.32).



EXPLORING THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Now that we have discussed enriching the environment, establishing a sense of belonging and lesson planning and evaluation, it is time to explore some tried and true activities and teaching/learning techniques for the Intensive classroom. Some of these will find meaning within the daily routines of the class, others, within the context of a learning situation.

Learning centres

Students should always be encouraged to further their learning through reading and writing. The physical arrangement of the classroom should allow for areas where both activities can be performed with ease, either individually or in small teams. The establishment of reading and writing centres will facilitate the use of reading and writing strategies and processes.

Learning centres can also promote interaction and project work by providing areas for shared reading of stories, listening to tapes or CDs, watching videos, discussing the topic of the day in pairs or small groups. They may also include computer stations, resource centres, or art centres, etc.

Journals

A journal is usually a notebook where students write freely on a topic of their choice or on a topic initiated by the teacher.

Having the students keep a journal has been suggested as a possible solution for two problems encountered by Intensive ESL teachers. One problem is the inclusion of students who are quite fluent in English, another is the lack of time to interact on a personal level with all the students. When they enter the classroom, students are usually eager to talk about their personal lives or an experience they had with English, etc. The journal channels this desire for communication and makes writing meaningful. Keeping a journal is also a good way to encourage writing for pleasure and may lead to creating a habit for life.

Here are some points to keep in mind before introducing the journal to your class:

- Students must be informed of the purpose of journal writing.
- They must be shown how to manage it (date, time, layout, etc.).
- Their first steps into journal writing may require some direction i.e. ideas.
- The time and length of the writing should be limited at first.
- It is necessary to give them explicit models of journal entries.

Dialogue journals and peer-response journals are two types that are frequently used. These journals allow the students to express their ideas, feelings and opinions while providing insight into their writing abilities.

- In the dialogue journal, the written exchange is between the teacher and the student. It becomes a vehicle for a two-way response. The teacher does not correct the writing but simply replies to what is written. If the student indicates a desire to have his/her work corrected, it should be made clear to the teacher.
- In peer-response journals, students become classroom pen pals exchanging comments of a personal nature or other communications.

Reader's Theatre

Reader's Theatre is a strategy for turning texts such as stories, fables, or poems into dramatic performances. This strategy enables readers to explore the "voices" within the text. Readers always have their text in hand; in other words, they do not memorize it. Also, unlike plays where parts are scripted in advance, readers in Reader's Theatre must break up the text into appropriate roles by themselves. These roles include both characters and narrators and they are assigned according to the abilities of the individuals participating. The text is never modified in Reader's Theatre.

Because there is no memorization, Reader's Theatre makes it easier to introduce elements of drama into the classroom. The richest source of material is found in literature. Following are some of the characteristics to look for in prose and poetry:

Prose

- lots of dialogue
- strong characters
- action-oriented

Poetry

- good rhyme and rhythm
- short lines (easy to say)
- topics kids can relate to

Prose and poetry

- potential for sound effects
- language appropriate for students (for lower levels, short lines and repetitive elements are helpful)

Scripting: adapting texts

Scripting takes Reader's Theatre a step further. When students work on adapting a passage, parts can be deleted as long as the meaning is maintained, but you can never add sentences to an author's writing. In scripting students choose a piece of writing or a scene that has a good balance of dialogue and narration. Individual readers choose their roles and highlight their parts.

Practicing

Once the roles have been assigned, teams must practice in order to work on expression and gain fluency. Although practice can first be done sitting down, once some fluency is attained the group should rehearse standing up. When giving feedback to students on pronunciation, intonation, etc., address the character rather than the individual. Props should be kept to a minimum as Reader's Theatre relies much more on imagination than the typical play. At this point, sound effects, gestures, mime should be given more attention.

Performing



For students at lower levels of proficiency, we suggest choosing a very simple text and doing the reading in small groups so that the students become more familiar with this technique. As they gain confidence, they may be called upon to perform in front of the class. Make sure students have a good understanding of the text before getting them to perform. More difficult texts may be chosen as the students' level of competency increases.

At the start of the performance, the narrator gives the name of the text, introduces the characters and the context of the action. Throughout the performance, narrators and characters face the audience.

Suggestion

Videotaping students during rehearsal could be done to improve their delivery. Videotaped performances could be shown to other classes or parents. Students tend to make a greater effort knowing that their performance will receive public viewing.

Reading logs

A reading log is a record of the books or stories the students are reading individually. Students write the title and the author's name and, after each reading session, they spend a few minutes writing the page numbers and their personal reactions to the reading pas-

sage. The purpose of this activity is to have students write their thoughts, feelings, and questions about the reading.

Here are some pointers for a better response to the reading: students may write about what they like or dislike, what they think might happen next, the memories it triggers, what they do not understand, words or phrases they want to remember. If the book is non-fiction, they may write about something that they have learned or they may want to share their insights with another student. The teacher can create a response sheet in the form of a chart to include some of the above guidelines. Finally, from time to time, the teacher assesses what is written in the log.

Shared reading

In shared reading, two students sit facing each other and take turns reading aloud from the same book. In this activity, students are honing their reading skills in a less intimidating environment. They can explain difficult words to each other because they are aware of the context and feel more confident asking for help and offering it as well. They can reflect on the story they are reading. Teachers should provide guidelines for discussion, for example: “Who was your favourite character and why? If you could change the ending what would you change?” etc. The teacher should set the time limit and may provide assistance while circulating.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful technique for the development of listening and speaking skills, as the storyteller is able to captivate the audience’s attention by using facial expressions, gestures and voice to convey meaning and feelings. The students get involved in the story because the action is dramatized right before them. In some cases, students may contribute to the dialogue by repeating in chorus recurring words or phrases throughout the text. Based on their experiences with storytelling, some teachers have made the following recommendations for the successful rendition of a story:

- Tell stories you like and feel comfortable acting out.

- Look for stories that have a simple plot, a lot of action, few characters, a clear climax, a satisfying ending and repetitive patterns.
- Be well prepared and well rehearsed.
- Analyze the story to determine the action, conflict and climax.
- Keep eye contact with the students.
- Consider the gestures, facial expressions, and intonation that will best create the mood beforehand.
- Outline the story for better understanding.
- Use props to spark and maintain interest.
- Pay attention to the students’ reactions and adjust your delivery accordingly.
- Encourage predictions of subsequent events.
- Avoid systematic question-and-answer sessions; instead, teach how to retell a story using mime and props.
- Follow up on story-telling by having the students prepare and present a story to younger students; involve the whole class in preparing it.

Show and Tell

Students are always eager to share an item that is significant to them. Show and Tell and the variations presented below are enjoyable ways for students to share their personal interests. In Show and Tell, students are asked to find an object they would like to present to the class. It may be a personal collection, a sports-related item (trophy, skateboard), an invention, a favourite photograph, a music-related object (CDs, posters), souvenirs, etc. At the beginning of the semester the teacher can ask the students to prepare a minimum of 4 sentences that describe their object.

Examples of sentences are:

- This is my baseball cap.
- It is small.
- It goes on my head.
- It is dark blue and with yellow.
- I love my cap.

As some students are nervous about their first show and tell, their presentations should be short and simple (K.I.S.S. Keep It Short and Simple). Some students may have difficulty expressing themselves and understanding others. In order to minimize the negative impact on self-esteem and motivation, to estab-

lish and build peer support and to facilitate classroom management, presentations can be done in small groups of 3 or 4 students. The roles you assign for cooperative learning can be reprised for this activity.

Once the presentation is over, the other students in the group ask questions. The teacher should model and display sample questions such as: Who gave it to you? How much does it cost? What is it made of? When did you get it? At the beginning, expect students to have difficulty understanding and answering; they should be encouraged to voice their lack of understanding and use communicative strategies to compensate.

Show and Tell can be made progressively more difficult by increasing the number of sentences and by excluding certain types of sentences (colour, favourite, etc). Also, the presenter is encouraged to give longer responses, for example, “Yes, it is my favourite because...” and encouraged to anticipate the questions so they may think of their responses beforehand.

As soon as the students become proficient enough, the practice of writing sentences and questions in advance should be abandoned in favour of more authentic and spontaneous communication. At this point teachers may want to form larger groups for the presentations, and one or two students selected, by the group, invited to present in front of the class.

Improvised Show and Tell

The students are asked to bring in a mystery object placed in a paper bag and stashed in their desk. This mystery object should be something not usually found in a classroom. They must not show their object to anyone. Some examples are a nutcracker, a stud finder, an ashtray from a car, etc. Divide the students in small groups and have them exchange bags. In turn, each student takes out the object, names it and describes its function. If the object is unfamiliar, the student invents a name and attempts to guess its use. Then, he or she is given one minute to expand on the importance it plays in our daily lives. If, for example, the mystery object is an ashtray, the student gives his or her opinion about smoking. If there is much hesitation, the teammates can help the student. A question period follows and it is also improvised.

Show and explain

In this variation, the students are given two minutes to teach their group how to do something. It can be how to make a simple recipe or a friendship bracelet, a magic trick or a sport. They must research their topic and look for visual support. They can have notes to help them but they must maintain eye contact with their audience most of the time. Once again these are best done in small groups but if you decide to have some of the students present to the whole class, the presentations must be very short and can be staggered over a one to two-month period towards the end of the Intensive session. Be aware that numerous discipline and management problems can occur when the majority of your students is not actively involved.

Sharing table

The idea behind the sharing table is to show special objects and is similar to a museum display. The students and teacher are encouraged to bring in a special object to be placed on a table or desk (just a few at a time). Students must first get their parents’ permission beforehand, and write their own names on or beside the object on a slip of paper. They should write a short explanation of what their object is and why it is special to them. Students may visit the sharing display and ask questions to the owner of an object. This can be done during sharing time or at a specific time of the day or week. This is an opportunity for you and the students to get to know each other better. The opportunities to expand on this sharing table are endless. A monitor can be named to set up the table and extreme care taken to protect the items. They should only be displayed for the duration of the activity and the objects stored in a secure place until they are returned to their owner at the end of class.

Telephone pals

Telephone pals is a way to develop the oral interaction competency outside the classroom in an authentic situation. Telephone pals requires the students to call their pal at home as part of their homework. It is best to start this type of homework



once the students have acquired a semi-functional level of language.

This activity requires parental approval i.e. a letter returned with a signature.

At the beginning of the week, students will draw names at random and these students will be their telephone partners for the week. It may be necessary to explain why partners are selected at random. The students will have the opportunity to change partners every week. Once the selection has been made, the partners meet in order to exchange telephone numbers, to decide on who will call first (they can alternate nights) and to choose an appropriate time to call (taking into consideration each other's evening schedule). All this information should be clearly noted in the agenda (telephone number, time of the call, who calls first).

Decide on the frequency of the phone calls. It may be twice a week or more but we suggest establishing it as part of their daily homework with the exception of Friday. The students must talk for 5 to 10 minutes and in English only. If they decide to talk longer they must have their parent's permission and they must continue to speak in English otherwise they should end the conversation and call back later.

To avoid problems, here is a suggested list of rules to give to the students:

- Find a quiet place to talk
- No time-outs allowed during telephone pals
- Do not ask your parents for help during the conversation
- If you cannot call at the appointed time, call your pal ahead of time to reschedule; leave a message on the answering machine if necessary
- If your pal has not called at the appointed time, wait 5 to 10 minutes and then call him or her
- If you forgot your agenda, consult the telephone directory or attempt to contact another friend who may have your pal's number
- Develop a strategy to remember to telephone your pal; ask your parents to remind you, set the timer on the oven or the alarm on your watch, etc
- Your parents should write a note if, for some rea-

son, you are not allowed to phone on that day

To help the students stay on task, consider giving them the following suggestions to guide their conversations:

- Read each other a different story (5 minutes or less) and report on it in the reading log.
- Give each of them a *Find the Differences* sheet; students discuss the differences
- Practice jokes, riddles and tongue twisters (a list can be provided)
- Invent a short dialogue or skit to teach the other pair in their group
- Play a game of 20 Questions; think about a student in the class while the partner asks questions to guess who he or she is



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The considerations contained in this section were selected among the numerous ones mentioned in the questionnaire. Certain situations may not apply depending on the model of Intensive in the school.

Changing schools

This applies to the 5 month/5 month model. In cases where there is only one group of Intensive, the school is usually twinned with another offering Intensive English. The teacher must therefore change schools in order to complete the year with another group. This transition requires careful planning and is difficult for all involved: the students, specialist and homeroom teacher. It is, in essence, like having September twice in the same school year, in that both teachers and students are expected to have fresh energy and renewed commitment to learning. One suggestion to minimize the stress of transition and conserve energy is to stop giving homework during the last week of the session. This means that all evaluations are completed, and there is time to analyze results and complete report cards.

At times, students become very attached to the teacher with whom they started the school year and the bond may be so strong that the “replacement” is often faced with uncooperative attitudes during the first few weeks. The students may feel that in order to remain loyal to their first teacher, they must reject or make life difficult for the second teacher.

Letting go is an important step in easing the transition. This takes time and patience, as the students will naturally go through a period of testing limits as they did in September. As we mentioned in the section on planning, learning situations that require active participation, that motivate, develop self-esteem and lead to a personalized product, will go a long way towards helping students with the transition. Rest assured that new links will soon be made and a return to normalcy will follow.

Advice to give parents

The following considerations should be discussed at the first parent-teacher meeting:

First, parents have to be made aware that they have a role to play in this Intensive model of teaching. In many cases, it is the first time their child is placed in a learning situation they are not accustomed to. The following are things parents can do or let their child do to encourage the use of English outside the classroom:

- Listen to the radio .
- Watch a television program or movie.
- Visit English-speaking friends or family.
- Speak to the child in English if possible.
- Play a boardgame or a card game.
- Subscribe to a children’s magazine.

Then, parents need to know that there are natural highs and lows in the acquisition of a language. It is difficult and tiring for a child who is not accustomed to it, to be in an all-English environment for most of the day especially during the first few weeks. Parents need to be especially supportive during the more difficult times and respond in an encouraging way, without pushing too hard. Teachers also need to be sensitive to this and allow for breaks and a change of pace when fatigue sets in. Students appreciate this sensitivity and respond to it well.

Finally, subscribing to a magazine can be proposed to parents early in the session as a tool for creating ownership of the language during and after the Intensive English session. This magazine provides cultural insight into the English media and gives ideas to explore in the classroom. Parents can encourage their children to submit drawings and riddles to the magazine or enter contests, as many offer these opportunities. There are several Canadian magazines, educational Web sites and software to choose from.

Many parents want their children to learn English for the opportunities it offers in the job market. Unfortunately, that reality is too far away to keep students motivated for long. They have to see and feel that English is useful to them here and now and can be fun to learn.

Intensive ESL and cycle organization

Unfortunately, in the past, the Intensive English class was often isolated from the rest of the academic experience. Today, as a member of the cycle team, the intensive ESL teacher is called upon to collaborate with other teachers to ensure the integration of Intensive in the educational project of the school.

All teachers may decide to work on an interdisciplinary project that includes the Intensive class. ESL shares a common bond with all the other subjects through the cross-curricular competencies and the broad areas of learning. This coherence will facilitate the work of everyone on the team.

Intensive teachers are often asked: “I know you teach English, but what do you do in English all day long?” As most people are accustomed to different subjects being taught throughout the day and week, this question is not without merit.

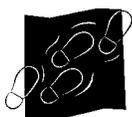
The simple answer is that we teach English. Yet, the complex learning situations in the Intensive model lead us to integrate knowledge from other subject areas. Students need to use math while processing the results of a class survey or history and geography for a project on the different provinces. All paths cross at some point or another and the Intensive teacher must help the students make the links through the use of English. However, the ESL teacher never evaluates other subject-specific competencies.



CONCLUSION

One of the greatest joys of teaching Intensive ESL is the opportunity to witness the fruits of our labour in a short period of time. The students experience the taste of success which leaves them with the incentive to pursue the learning of English on their terms and in their own ways.

Taking your first steps in Intensive ESL and integrating elements of the curriculum reform are challenges that require a positive attitude and much patience. We now invite you to add your own colour to the Intensive classroom experience.



ANNEX I

Planning a Learning and Evaluation Situation

Choose learning situation

- Title
- Description
- Duration

Consider:

Are the students solving a problem, answering a question, or attaining a goal that is complex and promotes the development of competencies?

Is this learning situation realistic?

Is it based on students' interest?

Are there cultural references/products?

Decide on the pedagogical intentions

- Broad areas of learning
- Choose broad area of learning
- Choose focus of development
- Cross-curricular competencies
- Choose cross-curricular competency/competencies
- Choose evaluation criteria
- ESL competencies
- Choose ESL competencies
- Choose evaluation criteria
- Choose essential knowledge (functional language, strategies, language conventions)

Evaluation

- Choose how and when evaluation will take place

Consider:

Are the criteria known to the students?

How will the criteria be presented?

Are the chosen criteria adapted to the pedagogical intention?

Are the criteria adapted to the students (level, cycle)

Are the tools appropriate?

Is the evaluation ongoing and interactive?

Classroom activity

- Preparing the tasks

Consider:

Organization

Activation of prior knowledge

Relevance of tasks to problem, question or goal

- Carrying out the tasks

Consider:

Construction of new knowledge

Modelling/guided practice/autonomous practice

Pedagogical approaches (different rates and styles of learning)

Guiding students through process

Explicitly showing how strategies help complete task

Ongoing evaluation/adjustment

Personalized outcomes

- Assimilation/transfer of learning

Consider:

Reflecting on the learning (students and teacher)

Reinvestment/transfer of new learning to similar and different contexts



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SPEAQ
7400, boul. Saint-Laurent, bureau 530
Montréal QC H2R 2Y1
Tél. : (514) 271-3700 Fax : (514) 271-4587
Courriel / E-mail : speaq@aquops.qc.ca
Site Web : www.speaq.qc.ca