

# Equipping Students for Optimal Language Learning



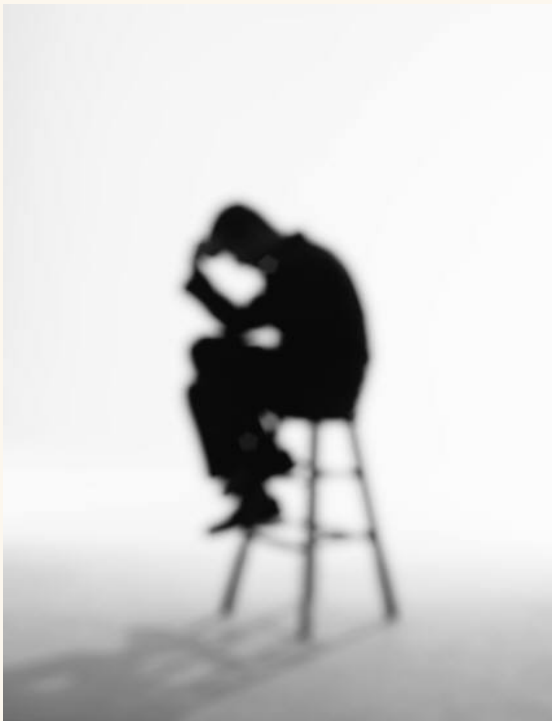
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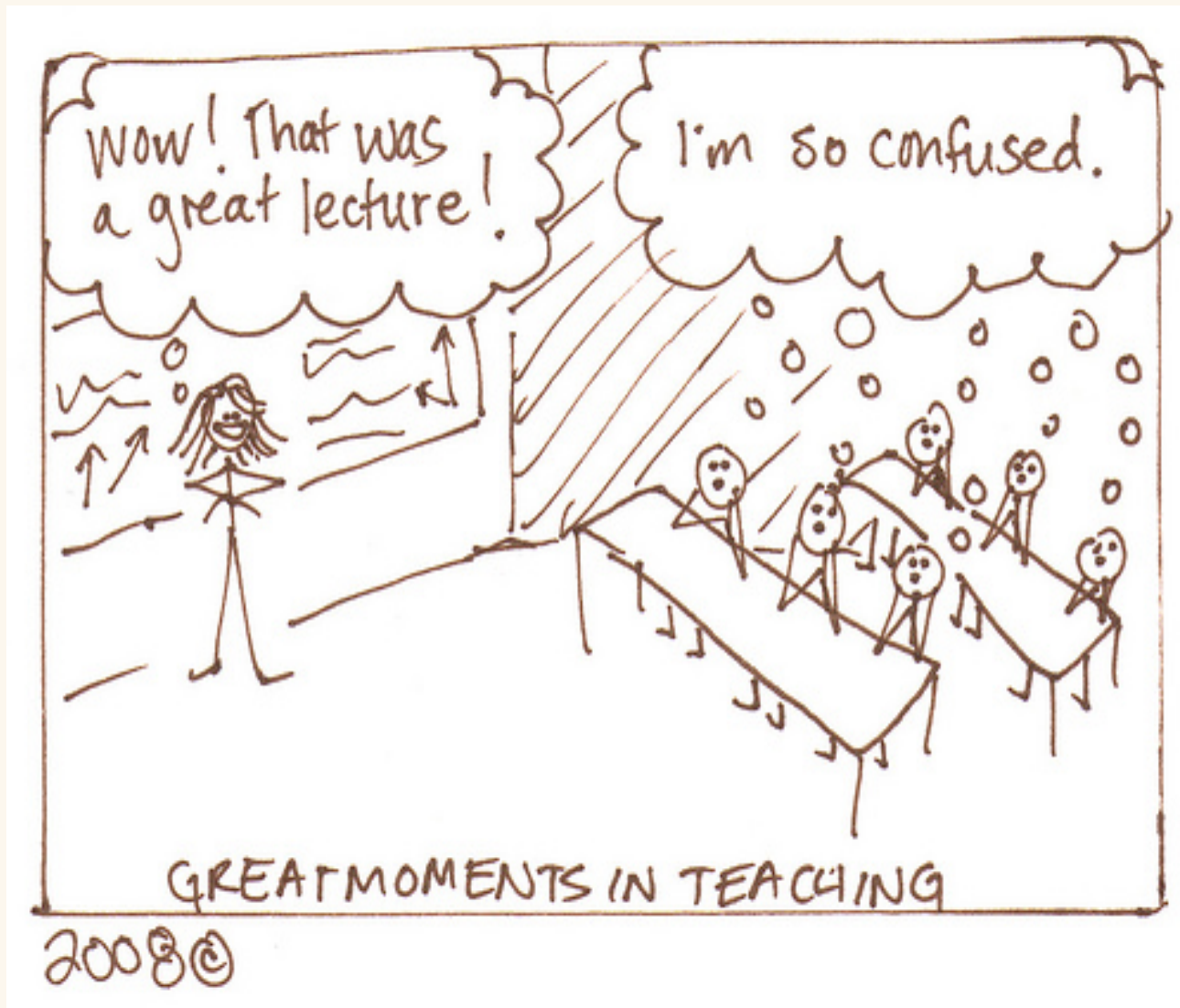
**October 20, 2015**

# OBJECTIVES

- \*To understand student challenges and our responsibilities to them as dedicated teachers**
- \*To develop strategies for working with students with learning differences**

# What issues do we encounter?





# **To experience success in learning a second language, a student must be able to...**

- **hear and cognitively differentiate between the sound structure of words.**
- **comprehend and remember the meanings of words and differing meanings when words are combined.**

# The student must also be able to...

- **understand rules related to sentence structure and grammar.**
- **retrieve information easily.**
- **mentally manipulate information to successfully communicate verbally or in writing.**

**Some students may experience extreme and persistent difficulties/failures in learning a foreign language, despite your help and support and the student's conscientious effort.**

***We strive to lower these numbers.***



# The Message?

**We must strive to...**

- **stay well informed**
- **anticipate challenges**
- **be proactive**





# Best practices to meet the needs of *all* our students!

*What teaching practices help make language learning accessible for all our students?*



# SOME STRATEGIES

## Compensatory

- **Make your syllabus available before class begins.**
- **Provide study plans and study guides.**
- **Orient students to the textbook and all its features.**
- **Provide time for students to meet with you individually (“mandatory” office hours?).**



# In class...



- **Encourage students with difficulties to sit in the front row.**
- **Teach students how to prepare for class—steps for classroom success.**
- **Clearly state expectations with regard to participation.**

# Teach Students How to Learn

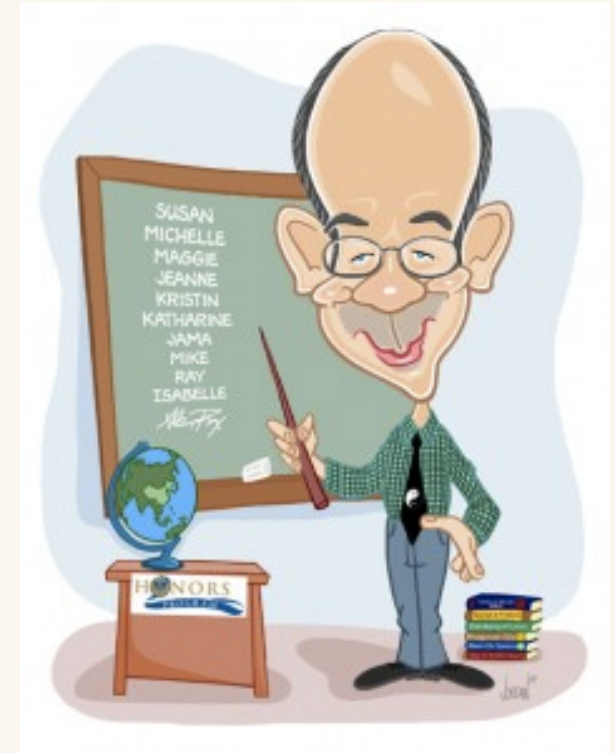
- **Guide students in thinking about how they learn... metacognition.**
- **Actively teach strategies on how to think out answers, how to learn materials, communicate info....**
- **Teach study skills and test-taking strategies.**

***Team approach--What strategies have worked for you personally and for your students?***



# General Classroom Procedures

- **Create a sense of community that promotes a feeling of safety.**
- **Structure and order the class; always assign homework in the same way and in same place.**
- **Focus attention of students verbally and spatially.**



# General Classroom Procedures

- **Teach small chunks of material and proceed through carefully sequenced in-class practice.**
- **Watch your language—clarity, simplicity, repetition**
- **Personalize**
- **Always provide a context...**



# **The importance of context...**

**The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange items into different groups. Of course one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities that is the next step; otherwise, you are pretty well set.**

**It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the short run this may not seem important but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be expensive as well.**



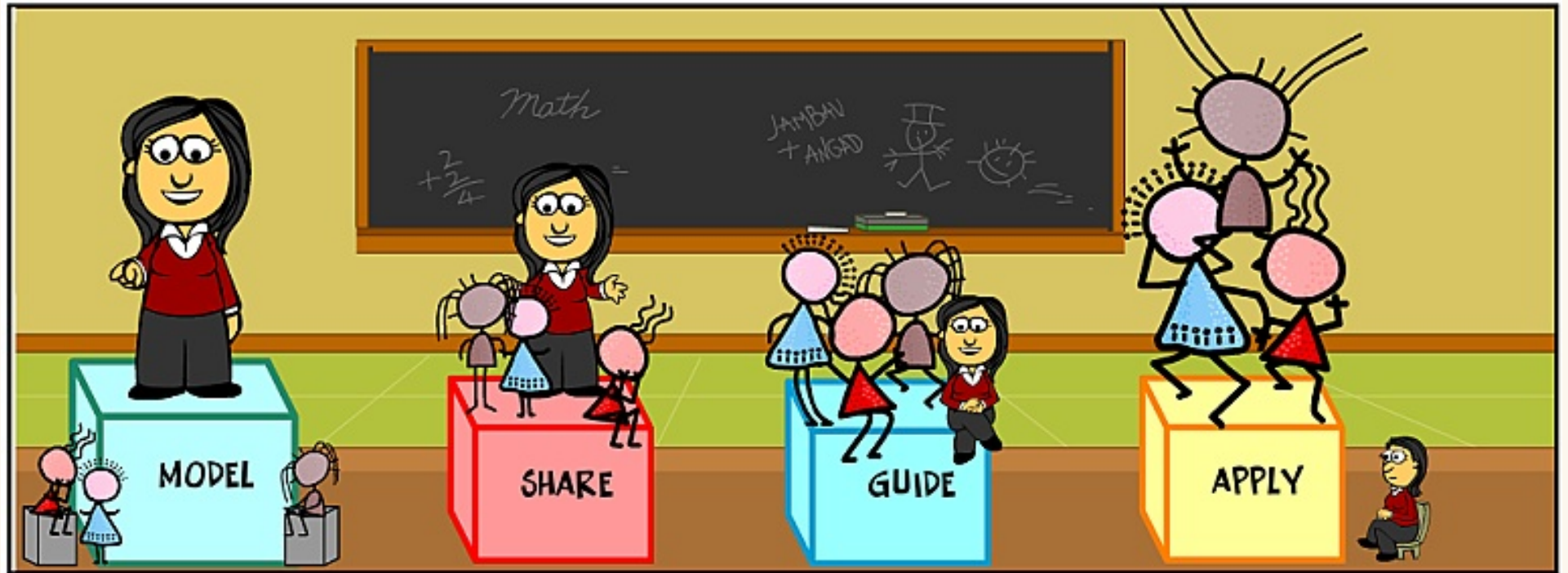
**At first, the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life. It is difficult to foresee any end to the necessity for this task in the immediate future, but then, one can never tell.**

**After the procedure is completed one arranges the materials into different groups again. Then they can be put into their appropriate places. Eventually they will be used once more and the whole cycle will then have to be repeated. However, that is a part of life.**

(Bransford, 1979; p. 134–135; original study by Bransford & Johnson, 1972).

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# Group Work—how to make it more successful

1. **Activate schemata**
2. **Give clear, concise directions, breaking into steps if appropriate**
3. **Model, often more than once**
4. **Set a time limit**
5. **Put students in groups**
6. **Monitor, facilitate**
7. **Follow up**



# Pace of instruction



- **Move at a slower pace; build in repetition.**
- **Continually recycle material.**
- **Provide extra time for students to process, respond and practice.**

# Tips for learning...

## Vocabulary

**Highlight** significant differences with **color coding** (number, gender).

Provide practice in sorting and forming categories of nouns.

Drill vocabulary with visuals.

Organize concentrated drills on shorter lists of vocabulary words.



# Verbs

Use **color coding** to match subject pronouns with verb endings. **Color code** verb irregularities.

Use grammar cards with different parts of speech to create sentences by manipulation.

Flash cards, posters to organize by types of irregularities. (thinking, planning, doing, reviewing)



**Take advantage of computer programs to reinforce vocabulary and grammar concepts: students hear, see a screen and use the keyboard.**



# Listening



**Provide a simple visual to establish a context. Teach students to read through related activities first and anticipate.**

**Use captioned video to combine listening, reading and visualizing images.**

**Keep segments short and gradually increase in length over time.**

# Writing

**Begin by teaching students to construct a sentence.**



**Create semantic maps to brainstorm and organize ideas for writing.**

**Present a skeletal paragraph and students fill in rest.**

**Give in-class writing practice to teach concepts such as topic sentences, supporting sentences and conclusions.**

**Provide a checklist of how to proof writing.**

# Testing



**Base evaluation on a variety of procedures.**

**Break up chapter tests and give them over more than one day.**

**Give clear directions for sections with models/ examples, when appropriate.**

**Provide an environment in which students will not be distracted.**

# Students retain:

**10** percent of what they *read*

**20** percent of what they *hear*

**30** percent of what they *see*

**50** percent of what they *see* and *hear*

**70** percent of what they *say*

**90** percent of what they *say*  
and *do*



(Sandra Rief, 1993)

Everyone knows learning must be serious and difficult and you must remain seated at all times. No fun allowed.

