Teaching English Online: The New Reality

I would like to thank you again for your participation in this webinar. I hope you have started to implement the teaching strategies you learned.

This document summarizes the information in the presentation and adds new ideas based on the questions you asked.

Please reach out to me with your questions or doubts. As we discussed, teachers need to help each other, and I am happy to support in the next steps of your teaching career.

You can also follow ELL Technologies online for information about future webinars:
- Facebook
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Thank you very much, and best of luck with your teaching.

Sincerely,

David Boughton
Director of Pedagogy
dboughton@elltechnologies.com

Questions and Answers

Thank you to everyone who asked a question or participated during the webinar. I have tried to answer those questions that more than one teacher asked.

First, let's look at my question for you: how can you improve this discussion question?
- Discuss your favourite fruits with your partner.

I was happy to see so many great answers, and I can see you followed the tips for creating effective discussion questions.

Some of you made the question more **specific**:
- "List your 3 favourite deserts with your partner."
- "What are your top 3 favorite foods?"
- "Name 3 of your favorite foods from around the world."

Some of you added "**why**" to force the students to explain their choices:
- "What is your least favorite food and why?"
- "What is your favorite fruit? Why?"

This question is my favourite because it uses a **task** instead of a discussion. Nice work Carla!
- "Your friend is having a birthday party. What three dishes do you want to serve?"

You could improve this question to become a full activity. Here is my suggestion for Carla's question:
- Your class is having a graduation party. Your group must plan the lunch for the party. Choose the 5 dishes you will serve. Make sure you consider everyone's allergies or dietary needs. (e.g. vegetarians, peanut allergies, etc.)

You also asked some great questions during the presentation. Here are some of the most common themes.

Limited Access to Technology

Many of your students do not have access to the internet or modern digital devices. In that case, you can use these strategies:

• **Use the technology your students have.** Television, radio, and cell phones are more common than high-speed internet, tablets, or laptops.

• **Research technical requirements before choosing a digital tool.** Pay special attention to bandwidth requirements.

> **"**Not all students can afford a smart phone or any gadgets to be used in online classes. What strategies or methods can be used for the students to take online classes especially in the pandemic time?**"**

• **Use the phone.** You can call students individually, or you can have conference calls with everyone.

• **Use asynchronous text discussion.** This could be on a platform, or if your student's only have mobile access, you could use messenger programs, like WeChat or WhatsApp.

You can also follow these tech tips so you have a better connection:

Preparation
- Test your internet speed.
- Don't use WIFI.
- Restart your modem and computer before class.
- Limit the number of connected devices in your home.
- Update your applications or programs.
- Check software and platform settings for technical requirements.

Problem Solving
- Turn off other applications running on your computer.
- Mute the microphones and turn off cameras when you have a delay.
- Do not share the screen if you have a delay.

Online Cheating

Many of you asked questions about preventing online cheating, especially on tests and exams. Here is a quick summary of the tips I gave:

- **Confirm the work your students submit**. You should be able to manually check their work that is graded automatically on the platforms. Remember, you need to confirm the student actually submitted the work.

- **Use software to "lock down" your students when taking tests**. LockDown Browser is the one I have seen used most frequently, but you can find others.

> **"**Hello! How we can organize exam in our new reality when students can easily use Google?**"**
>
> **Tatyana**

- **Record your students when taking tests**. All they need is a cell phone to film themselves.

- **Use software to check plagiarism**. You can find free and paid software that will automatically check if your students copied from the internet.

- **Compare all of a student's work**. If one assignment is much better than the student's other assignments, you may have plagiarism.

For Tatyana's question in the box above, you could use software to prevent students from accessing Google during the exam. You could also video record the students so you could see if they were accessing other websites.

Motivation

Several teachers asked how to motivate students to participate in class, turn on their cameras, submit homework on time, or generally engage with the course. Here are a few recommendations:

- Remind students they are part of a team and using cameras and participating in class is an important way to support their classmates.
- Understand each student's motivation to learn English and show them how English will help them in the future.
- Use learner-focused teaching strategies, such as giving them more opportunities to choose topics, tasks, and assessments.
- Don't correct too often, especially when practicing fluency. Students who are highly criticized may be afraid to participate.
- Use a variety of activities and exercises to keep things fresh.
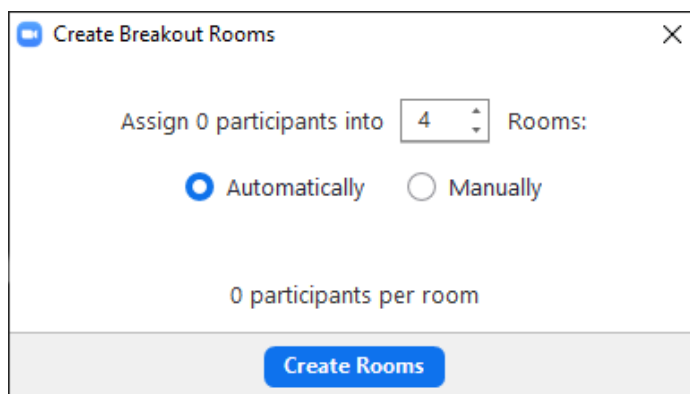
Digital Tools

Many of you asked for specific details on how to use the digital tools from the presentation. Here is some more information.

Breakout Rooms

Breakout rooms are separate rooms within a virtual classroom. They allow teachers to place students in groups or pairs in rooms where they can't hear or see the other students. These rooms can help you replicate the group work from your physical classes. As a teacher, you can usually visit each room to answer questions or supervise.
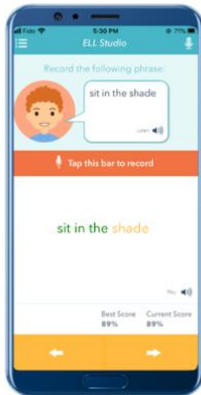
Some tools that offer breakout rooms:
- Zoom
- BlueJeans
- Adobe Connect
- Go To Meeting

Create Breakout Rooms

Assign 0 participants into 4 Rooms:

Automatically   Manually

0 participants per room

Create Rooms

Speech Recognition

In the presentation, we talked about how students want to practice more speaking. On many platforms today, students can record their voices to complete a variety of activities.

- They can receive a score on their pronunciation or language accuracy.

- They can listen to their own recordings to see areas for improvements.

- They can have simulated conversations with the computer.

These activities help students who are nervous about speaking in class, especially in front of their peers or teachers. Voice recognition tools allow students to practice freely without feeling embarrassed or afraid.

In the questions, many of you asked where to find voice recognition programs. Often you will find them on learning platforms or mobile apps. ELL Technologies offers three tools for students to practice their speaking and conversation skills:

"Why do some parents have a misconception about asynchronous learning? They tend to prefer synchronous only. How can we change this misconception?**"**

Studio APP

In this mobile application, students listen to the pronunciation of words and short sentences from native speakers and record their own practice. Students can track their progress on the dashboard within the ELL Technologies learning platform, and the teacher has access to the recordings to provide feedback.

Studio Desktop

This tool within the ELL Technologies platform allows students to practice their pronunciation using thousands of words and phrases from native speakers. Students receive a score and specific recommendations for improvement.

Speak2Me

Within the ELL platform, students can practice conversations with an avatar named Lucy. Students choose between two response options to continue the conversation. This is an excellent tool for students to gain confidence in their interactions in English.

Other Important Questions

I love 12 students in a class because it gives you so many options for creating groups: three groups of four, six groups of two, four groups of three. You have lots of possibilities with 12.

However, you should be prepared for any number of students. Sadly, you will likely never get to choose how many students are in your class!

> **"**What is the proper and more effective number of students for an online class?**"**
>
> - Mika

When parents see their child in class, they know something is happening. When they see their child on the computer alone, they think nothing is happening.

Focus on showing parents student products. This could mean sharing student presentations with them, showing progress reports from the platform, or creating a portfolio of the student's writing. These concrete examples will show parents their child's progress.
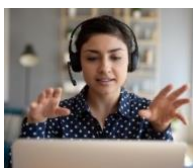
Important Terms

We discussed some important terms for teaching methodology. Here they are:

Differentiated Instruction:

In differentiated instruction, lessons are created with the goal of reaching student diversity, usually by modifying the lessons, using multiple formats, or adapting the content.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

Synchronous learning is online or distance education that occurs in real time, while asynchronous learning occurs through online channels without real-time interaction.
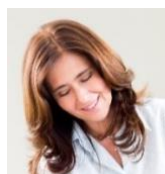
Accuracy and Fluency

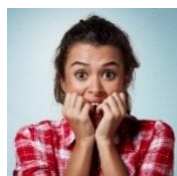Accuracy is the ability to use language correctly.

Fluency is the ability to use language freely.

Formative Assessment

Formative evaluation is giving qualitative feedback that does not count towards the final grade.

Concept-Checking Questions

Concept-checking questions are questions you can ask to see if students understand or not.

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