

Teaching **English** training videos



## Monitoring

Your students are on task: now encourage them

# Unit 7 Monitoring

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## 1 Before you watch

Think about a successful speaking activity you have done with your class recently. Think about these questions. Make notes in the box. Work in pairs if you can.

How did I organise my students (groups, pairs, whole class)?

How did I know the students understood my instructions?

What language (structures/vocabulary) did I want the students to use?

How did I know they were using the 'target language' and any other 'useful language' I have taught?

Where did I stand/sit while the students were doing the speaking activity?

Who were the quieter/weaker students? How did I help them to participate?

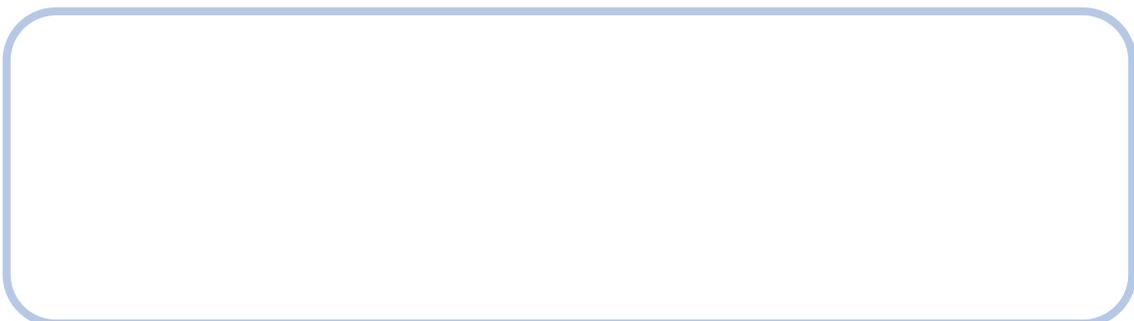
How did I know that my students had finished the activity?

All of these things are part of **monitoring**

**Monitoring** is when teachers watch and listen to students while they are doing an activity, without leading them in that activity. The teachers can then assess what the students are doing well or where they have problems.

## 2 Watch

Now watch Programme 7. Use the box to note down two or three ideas about **monitoring** that you find interesting.



## 3 Watch again

The programme gives advice about the following aspects of monitoring. Write the letter for each piece of advice under the title you see on screen. The first one is done for you.

### 1 On task

- Check that instructions have been understood.
- Check that students are working as you want.
- \_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_

### 2 Positioning

- Stand back.
- Take a back seat.
- Leave them.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Purpose

- Tell the students what you are monitoring for.
- Are they using the ‘useful language’?
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 4 Intervention

- Help them, but don’t interfere too early.
- Peer correction.
- If they don’t need any help, stay out of the way.
- Don’t become part of the proceedings.  
Give them a prompt and move on.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 5 Correction

- Correct grammar or mistakes later on.
- Make a note of mistakes to refer to later on,  
or in a future lesson.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 6 End of task

- Watch carefully, listen carefully.
- Rearrange the groups, maybe, and do the task again.
- \_\_\_\_\_

**A**

Don’t stop them from being experimental – encourage that.

**B**

Lose eye contact.

**C**

If you have one person who is left over, put that person into a group of three.

**D**

Don’t let the task drag on – leave them on a high.

**E**

If there’s one person who is obviously struggling, give them a monitoring task.

**F**

If you hear something that is particularly good, then tell them.

## 4 Analysis and reflection

Look at the following speaking task that a teacher is going to use in class.

### **TASK**

Student A describes his or her family tree to Student B who draws the family tree. The students then change roles.

Now look at the teacher's monitoring plan – how she plans to monitor while her students do the task.

**Checking they are on task:** How do I know if they are doing what I want them to?

*Are they speaking in English?  
about their families?  
Are they drawing each other's family trees?*

**Positioning:** Where am I during the task?

*Out of students' eye line  
Close enough to hear what they're saying  
Moving between pairs — maybe stay closer to ones who are off task*

**Purpose:** What am I listening for?

*Correct use of target vocabulary — family relationships  
Interesting content — unusual stories  
Interesting/complex use of language  
Common errors*

**Intervention:** When should I get involved?

*If they're off task — not speaking in English  
not drawing each other's family trees*

**Correction:** What/when should I correct?

*After the activity, because I don't want to interrupt their conversation . . .*

**End of task:** What will students who finish first do?

*Ask fast-finishing pairs to make a group of four and say something about their family to each other.*

Planning your monitoring like this can help you focus on what you expect your students to do and how you'll know if they do it.

### **TASK**

Now choose a speaking task that you are going to do with your students in the next week or two. Use the headings below to plan how you are going to monitor the task, using at least two or three of the ideas about monitoring that we've talked about in this programme.

- a Checking they are on task** How do I know if they are doing what I want them to?

- b Positioning** Where am I during the task?

- c Purpose** What am I listening for?

- d Intervention** When should I get involved?

- e Correction** What/when should I correct?

- f End of task** What will students who finish first do?

When you have done the activity in class, think about how you monitored.  
Write notes in the boxes below.

What worked well in your monitoring plan?

What didn't work so well?

What could you do to make your monitoring better?

## 5 Additional activity

When monitoring student speaking activities effectively, the teacher needs to be free to listen to the students without having to interrupt them. A common problem, especially in **monolingual classes**, occurs when students start using **L1** during a speaking activity. In this case the teacher will very often decide to intervene to put the students back on task.

There are many reasons for students using **L1** – they are feeling tired; they are keen to say something and want to say it quickly, rather than search for English words; or maybe they simply don't know how to say what they want to in English.

One way to encourage students to speak only in English in the classroom is to make sure they know simple phrases that they may need to use during speaking activities.

Below is a list of common phrases students might need in the classroom. Can you think of any more to add to the list?

You could give this list to your students and ask them to translate the phrases. They can then use it as a reference during speaking activities.

What does .....mean?  
 How do you say ..... in English?  
 How do you pronounce.....?  
 Can you say that again, please?  
 I'm sorry, what do we have to do?  
 Is this right?  
 What do you think?  
 I agree.  
 I don't agree.  
 Who's going to start?  
 I'll start.  
 You start.  
 Whose turn is it?  
 It's my turn.  
 It's your turn.  
 Really? That's interesting.  
 Oh no, that's terrible.  
 So, then what happened?  
 What do you mean?

Next time you monitor your students, make a note of any phrases your students say in **L1** and then teach them the English translation and ask them to add them to the list.

## 6 Suggested classroom activity

In the programme, John Kay suggests giving students a monitoring task during group work. Here are some simple activities to try with your class.

Students should work in threes for these activities. Students A and B carry out the task while C monitors. After the activity, C tells A and B about what she has heard. Then students can change roles, so that C has an opportunity to speak as well.

## Monitoring for language

Students A and B do a role-play,

- e.g. ■ customer and shopkeeper  
 ■ waiter and restaurant customer  
 ■ friend giving advice to another friend

Give student C a list of structures or language to listen out for and make sure that students A and B do not see the list. Student C has to tick the structures on the list when he or she hears them.

Example of shop role-play list:

Structures	Vocabulary
How can I help you?	Sweater
How much is . . . ?	Trousers
Have you got . . . ?	Skirt
What about . . . ?	Shirt
Can I try it on?	Other . . . ?

## Monitoring for pronunciation

Choose a sound that you have been working on recently in class. During any speaking activity, C has to note down the words that students A and B use which contain that sound.