

CAPE Alumni Internet Connection: English Teacher Talk

CAPE Internet Talk was started as part of CAPE follow-up activities to continue ties with CAPE alumni and those who are interested in professional development in English teaching. It is hoped that this would increase our bond and aloha among former participants, and that the information in the TALK would help our alumni and friends/members review what they know and deepen their understanding of issues and interest in the ESL field.

Aloha and welcome to another addition of teacher talk. We hope all of you are well and having a wonderful spring. In Hawaii, the weather is turning clearer and warmer after a chilly winter. Several weeks ago, I attended the annual Hawaii TESOL conference. There were many interesting presentations. Dr. Richard Day gave a presentation that illustrated many different reading activities. The audience members were able to participate and we all had a fun time being the “students”. Another CAPE lecturer, Gabriela Segade gave an informative presentation on critical pedagogy. I co-presented on language awareness and respecting different accents/dialects in the classroom. Many other English language professionals talked about a wide range of topics ranging from “the problem student” to teaching academic writing.

Teaching Tips

Older Children:

Using songs in the classroom:

I have noticed that many Korean students listen to American pop-songs. Bringing in the songs they like is one way to motivate high school students to pay attention and look deeper at the music they like.

Step one: Survey your students. Find 2-3 pop songs they like.

Step two: Go to the internet. Search the web for the lyrics or borrow CD and copy from liner.

Step three: Copy the lyrics (several stanzas is enough).

Step four: Introduce the songs by playing the CD if possible.

Step five: Give half the students the lyrics to one song and half the students the lyrics to another song.

Step six: One student interviews the other.

Interview questions:

1. What is the title of the song?
2. Who is the singer/group?
3. Please read me the song.
4. What is the song about?

5. Did you like the song?
6. Why did you (not) like it?
7. What is the main message of the song.

Step seven: If you like,

- choose vocabulary from the song to learn.
- have students number lines. Give them a vocabulary word and see who can find the line(s) it's in first
- sing together

Vocabulary:

Types of popular music:

pop music: popular mainstream music (e.g. In Sync or Brittany Spears)

rap: music poetry, more words than music (e.g. Tupac or Ja Rule)

gangsta rap: rap music that has more adult themes like violence. May be inappropriate for the classroom

hip hop: more danceable than rap music (e.g. Jennifer Lopez)

R & B: slower music usually associated with "soul" music (e.g. Usher)

alternative music: music that sounds like rock. May be a cross between rock and rap or pop (e.g. Creed)

Teaching Tip:

Younger children:

Step one: Pick a song your children know. (advanced=one they don't know)

Step two: Make groups of cards with several pictures. Make enough for one or more per child.

Step three: Give each child one or more cards.

Step four: Play/sing song. Whenever you say the word that matches the picture on the child's card(s), the child holds up the card.

Thoughts to consider:

Several months ago, this section was devoted to critical pedagogy. I began to think again about the concept because Gabriela gave an interesting presentation on writing using critical pedagogy. Judging by the questions asked in her presentation (and another presentation on critical pedagogy at the same conference) the concept of critical pedagogy eludes many teachers. I know that many Korean English teachers in the Second Language Studies department are interested in critical pedagogy as well.

Paolo Friere intended critical pedagogy to liberate people and make them more "human". This was to be done in an essentially grass roots manner among the most oppressed members of society. The question is how can those of us who work with a more affluent population of students make our own students more "human"? In some ways, I question whether most of us can do true critical pedagogy. However, there is still a need to give

our students critical thinking skills and make them question their own values and assumptions.

How does this affect us in the English classroom? I think one important issue the Standard English rhetoric. Is it really crucial that children speak perfectly? Whose standard are we using? Should children have operations to try to make them accent-free while a majority of the native English speaking world has a regional accent? Isn't "standard" English, just another accent, one that has been elevated to be the "standard" by its minority of speakers. The question becomes, how can we as teachers, our students, and our students' parents begin to question the myth of perfect English and create a more useful definition. This, in my eyes, is a prime area for critical pedagogy.

Let us know what you think! We have a new e-mail address (cape@capealoha.org)!

Please take the time to give us the addresses of anyone else you think might be interested in receiving this newsletter of the CAPE Internet Connection: English Teacher Talk. And don't forget to write us with any comments you might have. Mahalo!

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