Open World 1-3

Integrating native speakers
in the classroom

Ideas for teachers of Sekundarstufe I

Dear English teacher,

The aim of this handout is to help you in your daily work in the classroom teaching English learners who are at lower secondary level alongside native or near-native speakers of English.

As co-author of *Open World* and a teacher myself, but also as the mother of a fifteen-year-old son with native English who is currently at Sekundarstufe, I am very pleased to be able to contribute to this topic with the help of my general knowledge and personal experience.

Having native speakers in the class is an opportunity for everyone to learn: The native speaking students can often experience success and positive associations in class, the other students can benefit from hearing a different version of typically confident, accurate and idiomatic language alongside that of the teacher, and the teacher can grow by helping an already good linguist flourish. Having native speaking students in your class can of course also be challenging, as they also want to make progress. That is why with this handout we are here to offer some ideas and tips.

I hope that this handout will help to make the integration of native speakers in class a success story.

Best regards,

Lynn Williams Leppich
Co-author of *Open World 1–3*

Native speakers and teachers: two views

Looking at the situation from both sides can be helpful as a starting point.

Being a native speaker of a language brings huge advantages, but it can sometimes bring challenges and frustrations, too. Young native speakers of English attending Swiss public school may have mixed feelings about their English lessons:

- *But I can speak this language already! Can't we go a bit faster?*
- *I know the right answer to that grammar question, but I don't know why.*
- *I can understand more difficult texts than this one.*
- *They think I can do it all, but I'm really unsure about my spelling in English.*
- *Oh, I know that tradition from my home life in English.*

Having a native speaker in the classroom brings just as many challenges for the teacher. How many of these statements reflect your feelings?

When I have native or near-native speakers in my classroom,
- *I am a little more conscious of my language and the need to 'perform',*
  aiming to consistently deliver carefully crafted sentences.
- *I don't know how to feel or react if they correct me in front of the class.*
- *I worry they will get bored and switch off – how can I ensure*
  that they're still with us?
- *I know that they can help us out with language and cultural knowledge,*
  but I don't want them to feel this is their only role in English class.
- *I know I need to observe not only where their strengths lie,*
  but where they have potential to improve their English, too.

I have found it interesting to observe when my son is most enthusiastic about his English lessons. It is when he is able to add a new perspective or new content to lessons, when he is able to help someone, when he can choose a topic from a range of options, and when he is able to perform a task at his own level. He is less motivated when he has to learn specific vocabulary from a list just because it will be in a test. Having said that, he is also keen to learn to do new things with his English, such as making sense of demanding texts in both written and spoken form and expanding his passive and active vocabularies.

Native speakers bring a lot of prior knowledge and skills with them. In order to integrate them in class successfully, it is important to use these as a source of motivation.

On the other hand, the fact that they can apply language structures intuitively does not necessarily mean that they know the grammar that underpins everything they do in language.

Native speakers are often very good at spoken language, but may have deficits in grammar and spelling which they are unaware of. Some native speakers will have used their language purely for communication in the family, for example, and as such have no trouble speaking, but have had less exposure to structured work in reading and writing. Paying systematic attention to these skills both in lessons and outside them could really pay dividends.

It is therefore important to involve native speakers in class activities on a level where they can practise and improve their skills. This may involve applying stricter criteria with regard to grammar and spelling to texts written by native speakers (as long as these are not used for test purposes, of course).

At the same time, native speakers may need to be able to do extra tasks to improve their writing skills. I have therefore added a list of grammar and practice books I can recommend at the end of this handout.

Native speakers who are good at working on their own could of course also prepare for a language diploma (e.g. a certificate in the Cambridge English suite) and you could support this by allowing them to use some of the time reserved for the English lessons for individual work. And if they struggle with German, they could also invest some of this time to work on that.

In my opinion, reading is one of the best ways to enhance your language level. I have therefore put together a reading list for this age group which you will find at the end of this handout and have added a worksheet to go with it.

What *Open World* has to offer

Open World takes a structured, systematic and inspired approach to differentiated instruction. This facet of (language) teaching and learning has been a central tenet of the *Open World* concept from the outset and as such is firmly embedded within the design of the series.

Our concept for differentiated instruction begins with quantity. Depending on what type of class you are working with, you cover two or three of the volumes over three years. At the same time, the Support and Boost worksheets help you to further differentiate with *Open World.*

There are many ways a native or near-native speaker of English might be successfully integrated into EFL lessons. They can adopt one of the following roles, if they wish to do so:

- Expert on language: Encouraging the student to help others check their work, or inviting him/her to supply more sophisticated vocabulary in class.

- Expert on language variety: Having the student share input about his/her own variety of English (e.g. supplying the American English equivalent of a British English word used in the Coursebook).

- Expert on English-speaking culture(s): Inviting the student to share information, ideas and opinions about his/her English-speaking experience (e.g. school life in the US, Irish landscapes and weather, Anglo-Indian cuisine).

- Coaching role: Explaining something to another student / group of students.

It is important to discuss with every native speaker what role(s) they would like to take on and how often, what they really want to achieve in their English lessons, which areas they want to work on, etc.

Some general principles around differentiation which can of course also be applied in the case of native speakers:

- Increase the scope of work done: Set a text to read or podcast/TED talk to listen and respond to which is connected to the topic being covered in class, or set the student a topic or question to research and report back on which is related to the current unit.

- Increase the volume of work: Have a student read two input texts in the time others read one, for example. (Don't overdo this though, it may lead to reduced motivation!)

- Reduce the resources available – e.g. by having the student read a text in the Coursebook without the glossary, write a text without vocab prompts, or listen to an audio file without reading along.

- Maximise on potentially quicker task completion by inviting the student to work in a new but related direction, by creating a resource for him- or herself, or for the class (e.g. a mind-map, or Quizlet vocab cards).

Teacher's Book

The Teacher's Book, written by my co-author Corinne Giancola-Bürer, is the natural starting point for ideas. Here you will find concrete ideas for each unit of all three volumes of *Open World* on how you can make tasks more demanding or broaden their scope. Each Teacher's Book includes a section on *'Differenzierung'* at the beginning. Alongside commentary on the Support and Boost concept, there are also ideas for making tasks more or less demanding, so you can look out for tips on *'Anforderungen erweitern'* for your native speaking students.

Coursebook

Each unit in the Coursebook is designed to culminate in a 'Focus', a task which integrates the learning from the unit and which, following the Task-Based Learning (TBL) model, requires students to produce language. This type of open task is ideal for encouraging students to perform to the best of their ability and, as such, is perfect for giving native speakers a chance to showcase their skills and knowledge in English.

Extra ideas for native speakers

Open World 1

Unit 1, *Going places:* Prepare to be interviewed by the class about 'You and your English': Who do you speak English to and when? What do you find easier/harder in English than in (Swiss) German? etc.

Unit 2, *Without words:* Research and share information about animals like ants, bees and whales in resources beyond *Open World,* e.g. on websites such as Wikipedia.

Unit 3, *Healthy living:* Find a recipe which has been used in your English-speaking life to share with the class (e.g. a recipe from where you lived as a child, where your grandparents live, a culture your family shares).

Unit 4, *Exploring:* Research either New Zealand or Antarctica on the internet and write three to five multiple choice quiz questions to ask your class. Make sure you know the correct answers!

Unit 5, *Weather dynamics:* Write the script for a TV weather report which uses as many of the weather words on p. 94 as you can. Perform or record your text to share with your class.

Unit 6, *The deep blue:* Find a documentary about saving our oceans on YouTube. After watching, note down three to five things you have learnt and share them with your teacher.

Unit 7, *Patchwork city:* Write or record a text on a topic connected with your English-speaking culture. Include at least five relative clauses and have your teacher give you feedback on them.

Open World 2

Unit 1, *Dreams of flying:* Research and share any further information you find e.g. on websites like Wikipedia about Leonardo da Vinci, Daedalus and Icarus, and the Wright brothers.

Unit 2, *Weird and wonderful games:* Find a video about the Highland Games on YouTube and present what you find out on a poster or in a Word document. Include the name of the event, the equipment, and the rules.

Unit 3, *Catchy tunes:* Write some alternative song lyrics to a tune you know. Get feedback on your lyrics from your teacher and share them in class if you like.

Unit 4, *Reaching for the stars:* Research some acronyms from your English-speaking culture. Share the most interesting ones you find with another student or with your teacher.

Unit 5, *Hard times:* Read a simplified version of *Oliver Twist* and prepare to read an extract aloud to the class.

Unit 6, *Intriguing devices:* Interview your teacher (or another responsible adult) in English about the changes in technology they have seen in their life, and report back to the class.

Unit 7, *Incredible India:* Research an Indian recipe and write simple instructions in English for your class on how to make it.

Open World 3

Unit 1, *Further, faster, higher:* Find an online text about a sport which interests you. Use the skim reading strategies in the Language Companion to help you make sense of it.

Unit 2, *Down Fifth Avenue:* Write (or record with another native speaking student) a dialogue involving a language misunderstanding. Use the Jack and Sheldon dialogue for inspiration.

Unit 3, *Haunted houses:* Read or listen to the full story of *The Canterville Ghost* (in the original or a simplified version). Write down the three quotes from the story that you like best.

Unit 4, *It's showtime:* Choose an English-speaking city and check the 'what's on' listings online. Note down three to five shows or other events you would go to on a city break to that place.

Unit 5, *Green ideas:* Research how Bea Johnson, a Frenchwoman living in California, lives the idea of 'zero waste'. Surf her website or watch her on video.

Unit 6, *Sell, sell, sell:* Watch some TV commercials from around the world and decide which you think are the most powerful or the funniest. Share your top three with your class.

Unit 7, *Backpacking:* Choose a city or region of Australia. Research it and create a page for an online advertisement for this city or region. Get feedback from your teacher on your use of language.

Language Companion

The Language Companion is a helpful resource any student can use to check and learn new vocabulary and grammar from. It is also useful for native speakers to check anything they are unsure of.

Extra ideas for native speakers

• Create a mindmap (by hand or electronically) around one of the vocabulary areas on the opening pages of each unit (e.g. Volume 1, Unit 1, 'Discover the city', LC p. 5).

• Write a text using as many of the words from each of the wordlists as possible. Alternatively, create a short vox pop on video to share with the class (e.g. Volume 1, Unit 5, 'Fair weather', LC p. 38).

• Find a YouTube clip or podcast to fit the heading of one of the topics from the Language Companion (e.g. Volume 1, Unit 3, 'Healthy eating at school', LC p. 22).

• Record a clip or prepare a short presentation to help other students in your class with their pronunciation of sounds and words in English (see chart, Volume 1, LC pp. 60–61).

Support and Boost worksheets

Typically, it will be the 'Boost' worksheets which are likely to be the most interesting and/or useful for native speakers. They frequently offer a text in a more comprehensive format, ask more demanding questions, or expand on a topic by directing students to further resources.

Still, it is worth bearing in mind that native speakers may also need help in some of the more mechanical areas such as practising spelling, in which case some Support worksheets might also benefit them.

My four final tips

Working with native speakers should include the following:

- Vary the type of task set, the stage in the lesson it's set, and how task completion is verified, so that dull routine is avoided (e.g. so that the student doesn't have the feeling that if there's a text to read, he or she will always have to answer extra questions, and it will always be half-way through the lesson). At the same time, establishing certain routines could also be productive and helpful (e.g. the student is always permitted to read on in a book he or she has chosen while the class completes the necessary grammar exercises).

- Always ensure follow-up – otherwise the student might think an arrangement is not binding or potentially won't see the point. This follow-up can vary from sharing with the whole class, a smaller group, the teacher and/or others outside of the classroom.

- Ideally, have the student do something that will be both of benefit to him/her and to the class. Avoid giving the student the impression he/she is only serving the class.

- Ensure that students know that you appreciate that there are many varieties of English which are acceptable. This applies not only to vocabulary (e.g. British English 'rubbish' and American English 'trash') and spelling differences (e.g. British English 'colour' and American English 'color'), but also to grammar (e.g. use of the past simple instead of the present perfect in American English: 'She is the prettiest girl I ever saw.'). This is of special relevance in assessment situations, where students should not be penalised for other (intelligible) pronunciation or other evidence of a variety of English.

Extra material

Grammar activity and practice material

I can recommend the following books for extra work on grammar.

- Howard-Williams, Deirdre, Grammar Games and Activities 2, Penguin

- Murphy, Raymond, English Grammar in Use: A Self-study Reference and Practice Book for Intermediate Learners of English, Cambridge University Press

- Watcyn-Jones, Peter, Grammar Games and Activities 1, Penguin

The English Extension Organization (TEEO) is a collaboration of experienced teachers from anglophone countries who all have children in Swiss schools. The group is producing primary and secondary level materials to provide language development support for English-speaking students both at school and at home. See theenglishextension.org.

Reading Young Adult Literature (YAL)

The books below can be considered suitable extensive reading for teenagers. An asterisk (*) indicates a book suitable for older readers, in terms of content, while books which deal with challenging issues are followed by an indication of the topic in brackets. Each book listing also carries a figure in brackets which categorises it according to the difficulty of the language used. For further information, see https://lexile.com.

Alexie, Sherman	The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* (600L)
Anderson, Laurie Halse	Speak* (deals with rape) (690L)
Carroll, Lewis	Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (880L)
Collins, Suzanne	The Hunger Games* (810L) Catching Fire (820L) Mockingjay (800L)
Cormier, Robert	The Chocolate War* (820L)
Dahl, Roald	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (820L) The Great Glass Elevator (720L)
Dowd, Siobhan	The London Eye Mystery (640L)
Gaiman, Neil	Coraline* (740L) The Graveyard Book* (820L)
Green, John	Looking for Alaska* (deals with depression, suicide) (850L) The Fault in our Stars* (deals with illness) (850L)
Haddon, Mark	The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time (1090L)
Hinton, S. E.	The Outsiders* (750L)
L'Engle, Madeleine	A Wrinkle in Time* (740L)
Lewis, C. S.	The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (940L)
Lowry, Lois	The Giver* (760L)
Meyer, Stephanie	Twilight* (720L)
Palacio, R. J.	Wonder (790L)
Paterson, Katherine	Bridge to Terabithia (820L)
Pullman, Philip	The Golden Compass* (930L)
Rowling, J. K.	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (880L) (and others)
Sachar, Louis	Holes* (660L)
Sáenz, Benjamin Alire	Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (380L)
Tolkien, J. R. R.	The Hobbit (1000L)

Thinking, talking and writing about reading

Ideas for tasks students can do to engage with their wider reading in English:

- Create a short video where you share your opinion about the book you've read (a kind of book review on film).

- Write a diary entry for one of the characters.

- Draw up your ideal cast list for a possible film of the book.

- Make a poster about the book to share with the class.

- Prepare to read out a scene from the book for your class.

A book I have read

Title: _____

Author: _____

Year of publication: _____

You can stick a picture of the cover here

Main character:

_____

_____

_____

The plot in 5 sentences:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What I liked about this book:

_____

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_____

Who I would recommend this book to and why:

_____

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