

ESOL beyond the classroom: Support your students' independent learning

The suggestions below are collated from the feedback from attendees at our recent webinar and are presented as suggested.

Inclusion of a suggestion does not indicate that Gateway Qualifications endorses the idea. Please check that any activities are suitable for your learners and in line with any Centre policies on technology and data where appropriate

The suggestions have been grouped under the headings relating to the section of the webinar during which the comments were made.

A recording of the webinar is available at:

<https://www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk/webinars/esol-beyond-the-classroom-support-your-students-independent-learning/>

Speaking and Listening

- Online lessons help keep in touch with learners and enable them to practise their conversational skills.
- They can Zoom call with friends
- I am using WhatsApp to record and ask questions
- Learners can make a log and share reviews of audiobooks. Many were surprised how much they understood.
- Learners can make a video in flipgrid.
- Our learners watch films on YouTube - Iranian etc - rather than in English, and we then discuss the film
- We have used zoom successfully with students and you can engage in S&L activities quite easily using this.
- Learners can watch YouTube videos and then talk/write about them
- Students have been recording thoughts and feelings in a sort of personal diary and posting their recordings on Padlet.
- I post an audiobook on Google Classroom each day for my students to listen too
- I used the free Audible books for a similar purpose
- Allowing them more time to translate
- I got my learners to ask each other questions via our WhatsApp group. They chose different learners in the group just like in the classroom. It worked really well.
- I have asked students to 'interview' any new students joining the group and then introduce them to the group
- They could interview their friend or family member - through social media if they live alone. A lot of my learners who have children are getting help from their children
- Anticipate conversations and predict the vocabulary or questions that may be used. Then go into the situation and see how accurate the predictions were.
- We are using Google Meet to have live classes and chatting sessions
- I sometimes encourage my students to describe out loud what they are doing (e.g. I am making breakfast etc....) just to get used to pronouncing the sounds of English.
- Some tutors are posting things like 'The Big Night in....to listen to music.
- It's great to share cultural insights and not always have USA or UK centric films

- TED talks for listening tasks
- There are some apps - BBC Learning English for example
- I've been trying to encourage my students to arrange to meet up with each other on Teams or Zoom so they can practice speaking English together if they have no one at home to practice with
- Regarding the lack of resources. If a learner has a phone maybe they could call themselves and leave a voice mail and track their progress and listen to themselves.
- They could probably call each other (phone calls)
- Could ask learners to post music they like in the stream in Google classroom - give links
- Zoom chat (based on the actual topic) in pairs or small groups
- Some students are speaking English with their families
- My learners frequently use: www.newsinlevels.com
- Also, when they shopping in a supermarket, to approach a staff member and ask for a product (even when they know where it is), again, simply to get used to interacting in English and voicing out loud a question. (build confidence and practise pronunciation).
- On Google classroom there is a stream where you can ask a question everyday
- Online chats with classmates
- When I was doing face to face lessons and my learners used to take the bus to college, I used to ask them to share what conversation they heard on the bus on the way to college that day.
- How about an audio message rather than written as understanding is sometimes better from audio

Writing

- I also email my student links to the Theatre shows each week
- We are writing a story verbally together via WhatsApp
- As a teacher if you develop their independent learning skills and encourage them to create study buddies, that can be a possible strategy.
- I started the story and learners are continuing it
- Subtitles in English are a good way to consolidate even if watching in a native language.
- I record the lessons on PowerPoint presentations and ask them to respond to some points by recording themselves.
- We are doing a blog about online learning
- We've asked our learners to keep a photo isolation diary.
- They reflect on my lesson, say the pros and cons of online learning, etc
- Write about things that make them happy, food they've made, music they're listening to, programmes they're watching, etc.
- I've done a diary from the zoo, watching Edinburgh zoo's webcams for some inspiration. Could be good for routines and I gave my learners the choice if they wanted to be a zoo keeper or an animal.
- I found when I did fairy tales with mine they really struggled with the creative side because they aren't used to being creative. How do I address this remotely?
- To motivate them creative writing, provide some pictures or a list of words.
- Recipe writing, students texting one another on WhatsApp, creating a blog
- Using banana grams is great for lower level learners to practice building words
- ending of a story/ change the ending.

- Love the acrostic idea for lower level learners! Will use that with my Pre Entry and Entry 1 learners. Thanks!
- I have used the diamond structure poem very successfully. PronPack is a good resource for using poetry for pronunciation. Diamanté poems: 1 noun, 2 adj, 3 verbs, 4 nouns, 3 verbs, 2 adj, 1 noun
- They can write phrases in their own language and translate then into English
- Commenting/questioning each other's reviews posted online
- write a diary
- Giving the learners the ending of a story and asking them to create the story worked nicely. Can then go on and compare the different stories of students.
- Give some simple headlines and ask students to write a story. This can be of different lengths for different students.
- A day in the life of a worker.
- Emailing the teacher! 'chatting' via email
- I use a dictionary with my ESOL learners and have words of the session
- Writing about being an animal seemed to work well.
- Learners have their own dictionaries
- Playing Boggle-type games like Wordament app
- Today, in my lesson the students watched a short news report and wrote a formal email based on the news report.
- Kahoot word games
- What about writing own recipes?
- I've used postcards
- Idea: you could write a review of your favourite film.
- Love the idea of pre-tutoring vocab as creative writing can be frustrating without knowing the words could
- <https://www.englishlanguage.org.nz/hub/teaching-resources/picture-resources/> have great picture stories to download for learners to create their own stories.

Reading

- We have a six book reading challenge, which has proved successful for higher ESOL levels in getting them to read more and engage with more books in their own time. Some have found e-books useful as well.
- Easy readers
- Something I've been doing now is to ask learners to post on Facebook the recipe of what they cooked that day
- Our pre-entry learners have online sessions to practise their reading skills, reading short texts in turns with their tutor.
- Have a list of four or five words and find similar words or actual synonyms in the text.
- Suggestions for reading: students matching headlines to texts, creating questions for the text, students cutting up and reorganising texts, students removing key words (e.g. verbs in the past) or highlighting main verbs or prepositions or anything they want to focus on
- Reading an article in the newspaper and then talking about their opinion on the article. Reading aloud to practice reading and speaking at the same time.
- Could read the news and write a summary
- Summarising using the key words from the text
- Find synonyms
- Reading magazines of interests/hobbies
- Reading and reviewing books

- Reading recipes
- Blogs
- Reading children's story books for lower levels
- Finding text features for higher levels
- Reading feeds on Facebook but in English
- Reading and summarising texts
- Reading timetables
- Jigsaw reading
- Reading magazine titles and trying to guess what the article could be about, then reading the article to check if they made a correct prediction
- Reading and personalising
- Reading the instructions you give them on WhatsApp for the class that week.
- We ask the learners to read the same story from different newspapers, and then they discuss the differences, and write it down.
- Bring in or show their own authentic texts e.g. letters from GP/hospital/college
- Skimming and scanning newspapers/magazines for specific subject areas
- It could be linked with speaking and listening to feedback what they have been reading and articulate that by describing the language features / layout etc
- When lockdown had just started, I got my learners to make a powerpoint about coronavirus.
- Workbooks for capturing the work and to give feedback through
- My learners love posters (I also use some of them for revision as displays)
- My Level 2 learners have been working in groups on Teams to decide on the correct answers for a task about word classes and had to put a work plan together with deadlines about how they were going to go about it and submit it to me for correction, helping them to develop their time management skills and to manage their workload, as well as collaborate with each other.
- If your college subscribes to Microsoft Office then Word docs/PPT can be used as online collaborative documents for students to work on remotely together
- We created a storybook from around the world - they write one they know well. Then we will share the stories in the first week back in class and with the prison library. Gave them storyboard blanks or writing paper to use.
- Just to add, Geoff Petty's ideas on LEARNING TEAMS AND STUDY BUDDIES are of great help in developing learners' autonomy
- My learners have really enjoyed practising tongue twisters
- I agree when I sent an acrostic poem task for Easter to E2 learners I did an example of my own. This seemed to help from the comments and poems they sent me.
- I use videos and simplified questions with pre entry learners