

The Teacher Development Podcast Episode 6

Amie: Welcome to the Teacher Development Podcast. This is Episode Six. In every episode, we are breaking down a lesson plan taken from the teachingenglish.org.uk website and we are exploring different ways to adapt the activities. My name is Amie and I'm here with Chris. Chris, how are you?

Chris: I'm great, thanks, Amie. I'm excited to hear what the teachers have to say.

Amie: This week, we talked to Fatima, a teacher from Pakistan, about doing themed lessons with our students. Here's what she said.

Fatima: Well, I'm Fatima Shahid and I have been working as an elementary school teacher in Bokhara and I also have been working as a Teacher Trainer with the British Council and I think it is the duty of the teachers, like we should educate the students about our national days, or some other days, which we celebrate nationally, internationally as well and the vision of the students will be broadened because you know, the world is a global village now; everybody's connected. So, I think we should connect we, as a teacher, we must connect to them, we must help them to connect with the international days as well.

Chris: Now in this episode of the podcast, we're going to look at a lesson built around world monkey day. It's a fairly new festival; the first one was in the year 2000 on December the 14th and it's a day when people are encouraged to do something to learn about monkeys, even a day when monkey business is actually encouraged. And it's not just about monkeys, it's about all primates. It's been celebrated all around the world at art galleries, universities and zoos. It was even celebrated at Lahore Zoo, where visiting students recited poems, performed skits, and fed the monkeys.

Amie: So tell us about this lesson plan, then.

Chris: The lesson begins with an active warmer. Some of the students will perform animal actions and the other students will try to guess which animals they're miming. You can even turn it the other way round, and give one of the students the role of the teacher. So, they can say an animal, and the other students can mime the animal that they're told to. Either way, it should be a fun start to the lesson. I asked Gulshan if she thought her students would enjoy doing a lesson about monkeys.

Gulshan: Kids have a very much interest in learning about monkeys. For example, they want to learn how monkeys behave. They want to learn about monkeys' habits. At this point, being a teacher, we should also differentiate between what is a monkey and what is a chimpanzee or what is a gorilla. We should differentiate between all these types. And kids normally like and love to see monkeys in the zoo, for example, we when we teach about monkeys, kids start giving responses in a very interesting way they are very (seems to be) very self-motivated for learning and there, they are responding they're applying in a very rapid fire way and they want to learn about

other animals as well. Not only monkeys, but the kids, I have observed that kids have, students have a deep interest in learning about animals. They have a passion about learning animals, they have a natural affection towards animals and plants.

Chris: In the next part of the lesson, the teacher will elicit some information that the students already know about monkeys and put it into a chart on the whiteboard. So, you can start by drawing a chart, which says *monkeys can*, *monkeys are* and *monkeys like* and then as the students call out their information, you can add it to the correct section of the chart. Now this is interesting because although the lesson is for very young learners, this is actually a grammar activity. We asked Gulshan about teaching grammar with young learners in Pakistan,

Gulshan: We start doing a mixture of combination of many parts of speech from grade third to five. Because, when we start alphabets, when we teach them A B at the same time teach them A for apple and Apple is a noun, but adjective, as far as adjective is concerned from great third to five.

Chris: So, the great thing about this part of the lesson is that even if your students don't use words like adjective, verb and noun, they're still thinking about what kind of words are appropriate to complete the sentences. Then in the last part of the lesson, the students will be doing a craft activity. So, they'll use these templates, cut out templates of monkeys, and cut them out so each child has a paper or cardboard monkey and then they can write some of the sentences which they formed onto the monkeys and make this mobile. We asked Gulshan about whether she uses crafts in her English lessons.

Gulshan: So as we know that, being a teacher, we have to work on four skills, and creativity is one of them. I think using crafts is a way to teach about creativity. They can be creative, they can make many innovative ideas, many innovative things from true crafts. After doing it, they will be able to give demonstrations and they will be able to differentiate its elements. And they will also be able to tell how we generate a new thing, how we make a new thing. We also use plastic bottles, waste plastic bottles and recycle them to make other articles for reusing them.

Amie: Thank you to Gulshan, Fatima and Chris. To finish. Let's hear from Fatima about the advantages of celebrating international days with your students.

Fatima: I like the themed lessons because I think the themed lesson give the students more information about a particular day. For example, we have so many days like fashion days and some other which we need to tell the students and if we teach them at the school, I think they can understand these things better as well as they will share with their parents with their fellow friends and they will spread the knowledge of that particular thing. So, yes, I do it in my school as well. And I like it by the way.

Amie: And don't forget you can find this lesson plan at the teachingenglish.org.uk website. Please leave a comment telling us how you use crafts in your English classes.