

COMPELLING Distractors



Handout

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Compelling distractors

One of the many reasons why you may see students that are not engaged in the class is because there is too much noise surrounding them, by noise I mean to say all the things going on their minds, things such as: other students talking, the use of cellphones, Ipods, problems at home, too much homework, stress etc, as a result of all these things, the affective filter goes up and that discourages students from learning according to Krashen (1992).

We need to counteract that noise with what I have defined **COMPELLING DISTRACTORS**, as teachers, we need to provide our students with a range of engaging or compelling activities in order to better up their learning conditions, by doing this, the affective filter will then go down and the language acquisition device would do its job. (Chomsky, 1961)

1. The purpose:

I will provide a wide range of activities that could be implemented in the class in order to:

- Liven up teachers' classes
- Enhance the use of English in and outside the classrooms.

2. Content to be covered:

- TPRS
- A SPECTRUM OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES
- THINKING ROUTINES

3. Type of presentation: Informative & demonstrative

4. Type of workshop: Live training

5. Target audience and interaction: English teachers

6. Expected outcomes

- Teachers will actively participate in the activities that are being presented.
- Teachers will be able to apply the learning strategies in their classes.
- Teachers will be more aware of providing more engaging activities for their students

Food for thought

Never had I been as restless about education as I have been this year, the students from 9th and I held a very strong debate on how they felt about our educational system and these are some of the things that came out:

- Students are unengaged in the classes due to a lack of teachers' creativity and innovation.
- Students feel that school is killing their creativity because teachers do not provide them the opportunity to propose the way they want to be taught.
- Students feel that our educational system is ONE SIZE FITS ALL, teachers do not take their learning styles into account.
- Students feel that somehow we are preparing them to be slaves in a company, that is, to sell their time for money.
- Students feel that somehow teachers label them with grades and forget that behind those numbers, there is a human being who has other needs rather than a math, science or an English lesson.
- Students feel that schools tend to do nothing about the low achievers, they understand that if they do not do well, the school will try to get rid of them so they do not mess up the school's reputation in standardize tests.
- They say that teachers teach the way they were taught and teachers were taught by very traditional teachers.
- Students say that schools should give them the right tools so they can succeed in the future, they say that schools should also have subjects such as: financial ed, health ed and other subjects that provides them with life skills.
- Students also feel that some teachers are not really passionate about what they do.

I think that some if not many of the things our students have mentioned, should really make us reflect upon our educational practices, I have been an English teacher for more than 15 years now, and to be honest, I had never taken the time to think about how my students felt or the things I needed to do in order to have more engaging and effective classes, I guess that could either mean that I am getting old or I am spending too much time in our principal's office. The truth is that not only our students are calling for a change, but our future generations need to be educated to BE THE CHANGE, couple of weeks ago I had trouble understanding why one of my students cried during her speech on education but now I understand that people are just getting tired of the same old stuff over and over.

Being a teacher is no walk in the park, I mean, planning for more than 3 courses, grading more than 100 exams, dealing with people's bad attitude, smiling even if we are having trouble at home or even at work, designing, painting and decorating billboards, attending meetings, getting up early to get to work, calling row, arranging meetings with parents, filling out all kind of reports, checking homework and notebooks, writing people up for misbehavior etc, sometimes I just get the feeling that we are caught up taking care of all these clerical duties that we just forget about the most important aspect of our job which is planning, creating classes that foster students' communication skills, teamwork, curiosity, decision making, self-confidence, organization, problem solving, creativity, integrity, interpersonal skills, and leadership, these are the skills we urge to educate our kids with.

I partially agree with Ron Clark's call to educators, on the one hand, I do believe that we need to spark things up in the class in order to have more engaging lessons, provide our students with what I have called '' compelling distractors'' which is nothing but strategies to prevent our students from getting unfocused or distracted in the class, but on the other hand, I also think that students need to develop self-management and self- motivation, they cannot always rely on others to motivate or drive them to do what they have to do.

I understand this is very sensitive territory but, please, take this as an invitation to reflect upon what it takes to be a good teacher, we need to be humble enough to recognize that we DO need a change.

Juan Carlos Candelo Millan

The lucky bone

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- A. after hearing the story, what variations would you make?
- B. How important do you think it is for a teacher to be able to tell stories?
- C. What words would you remember the most from the story?
- D. What language functions could this story be used for?

You may take notes on the space below:

Mystery solving



Mystery solving

- Task: Mr. Kelley was murdered.
- Students must use clues to collaboratively find answers to five questions:
 1. who was the murderer?
 2. the weapon?
 3. the time of the murder?
 4. the place of the murder?
 5. the motive?

A. What grammatical structures would you teach using this activity?

B. Would you use it at the beginning or at the end of a class?

C. What variations would you make?

D. How much planning time do you think this activity would take?
Would teachers really have the time and the resources to plan an activity like this?

E. How engaged do you think students would be with this activity?

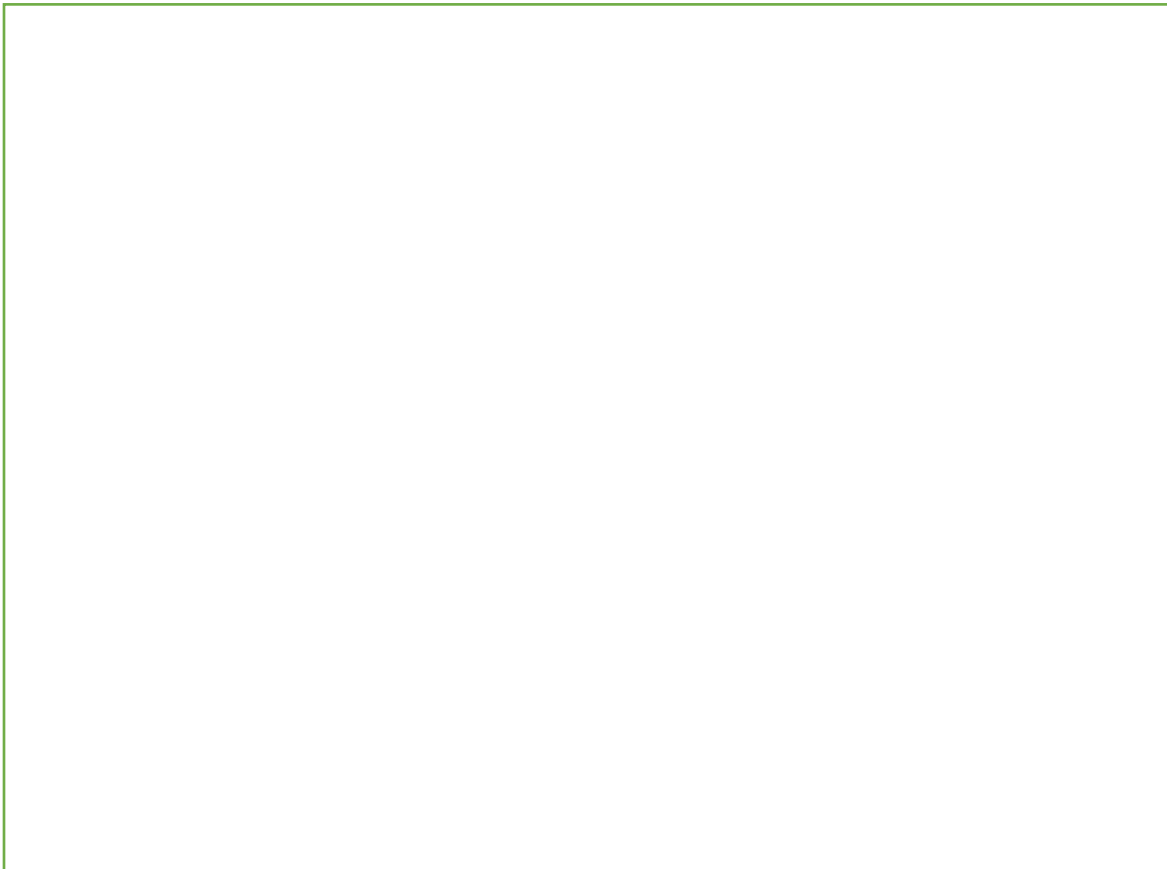
You may take notes on the space below:

M&M's

Ice breakers /
wrap up
activities

- Snake
- Memory game (I use it for comparatives)
- Hangman
- Bingo
- Jeopardy
- Who wants to be a millionaire
- Board games (monopoly type)
- Heads up / charades
- Tic tac toe
- The psychologist chair
- The soccer match

You may take notes on the space below:





Jigsaw

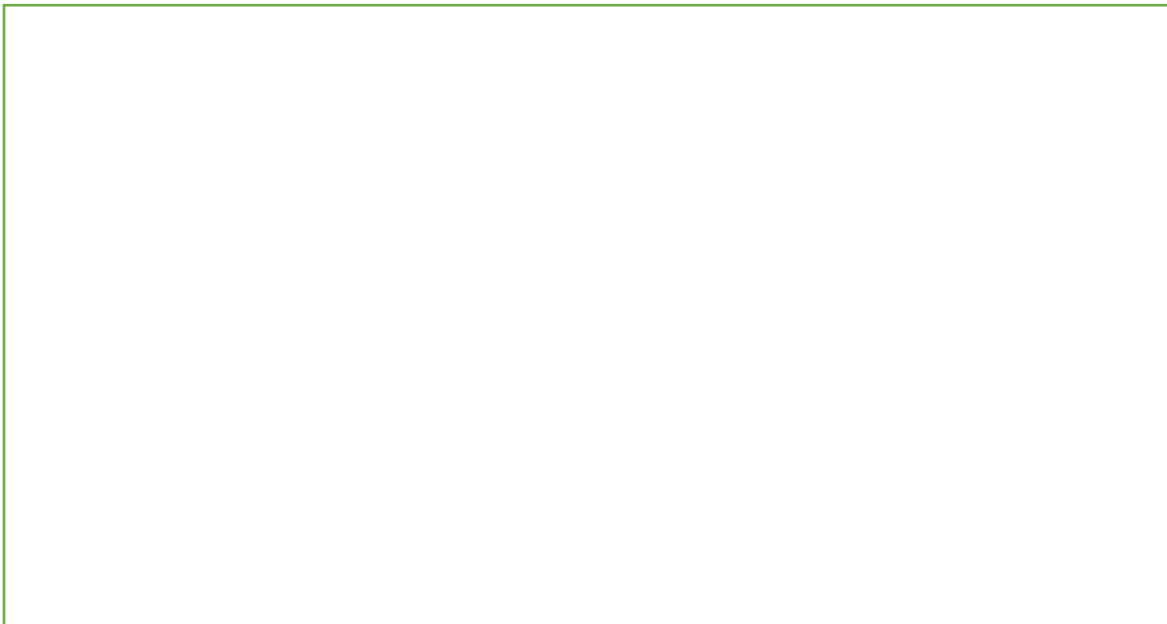
- Divide the students into groups of 4 or 5 (home groups)
assign each person a different topic to explore (Uribe,
duque, petro, lleras and fajardo)
- Give the students enough time to explore, then have
them regroup with the people exploring the same idea
to share information.
- Then have them return to their home groups to share
newfound information.

A. What variations could you make to this activity?

B. How would you use it in class?

C. Do you think teachers avoid this type of activities because of the noise it generates?

You may take notes on the space below:

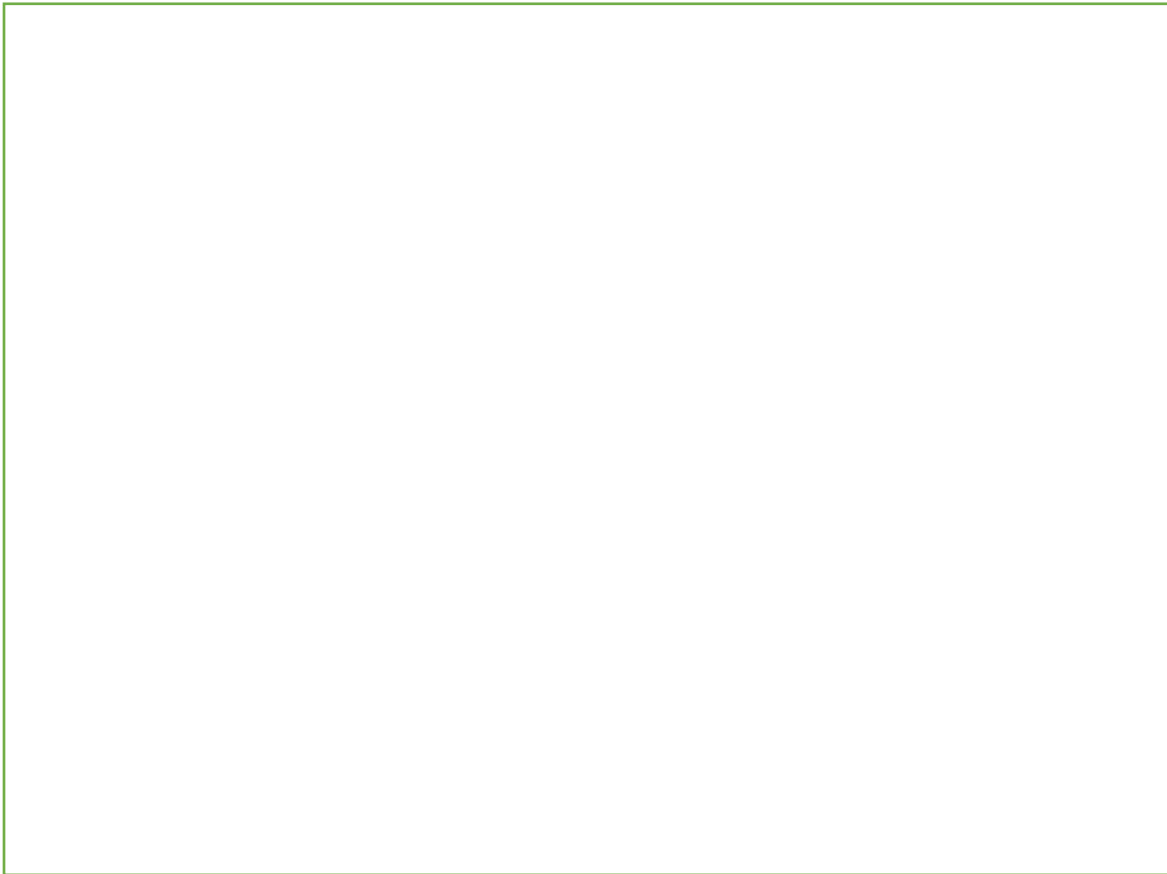




Thought
provoking
questions

- What harsh truths do you prefer to ignore?
- Is free Will real or just an illusion ?
- Is the meaning of life the same for animals and humans?
- If someone you loved was killed in front of you, but someone created a copy of them that was perfect right down to the atomic level, would they be the same person and would you love them just as much?
- What does it mean to live a good life?

You may take notes on the space below:



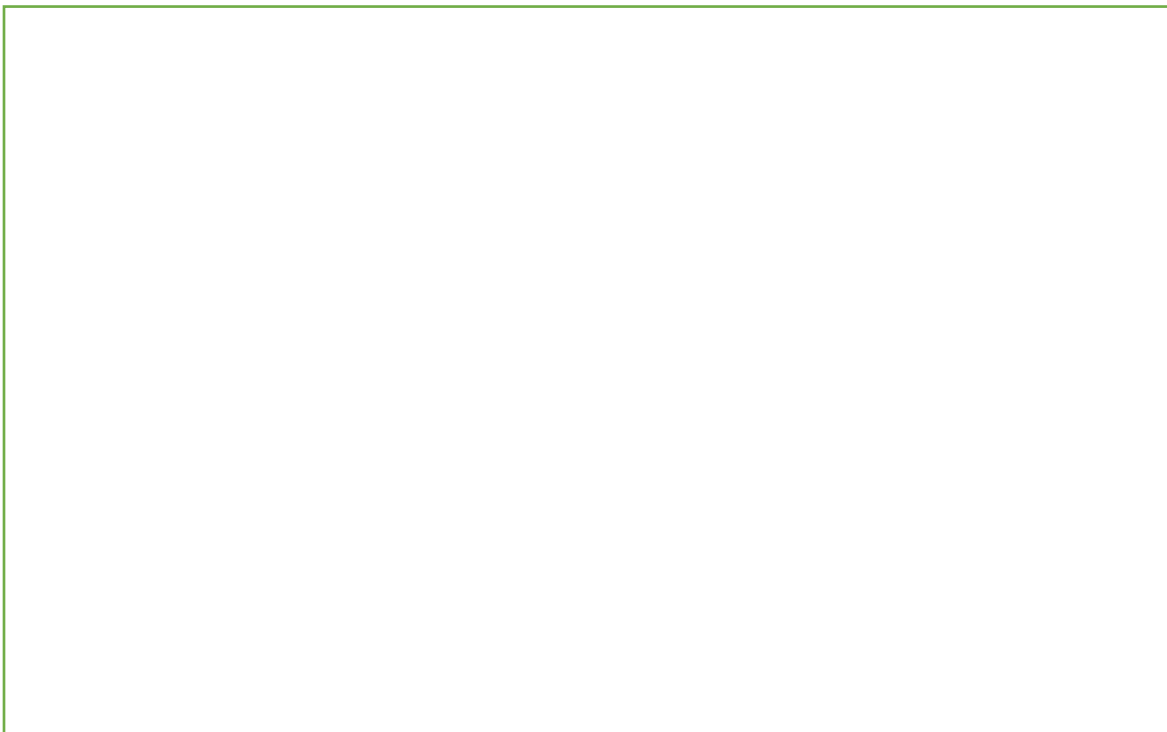
A red speech bubble graphic with the text "Exit tickets" inside. The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and is set against a background of light blue diagonal lines.

Exit tickets

- Today I learned
- I was surprised when ...
- I am beginning to wonder ...
- I think I Will
- I would have liked
- Now I understand
- Class would be more interesting if
- I can be more successful in this class if I ...
- I wish

Please answer the questions above based on your experience in class today.

You may take notes on the space below:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin green border, intended for students to take notes on their answers to the exit ticket questions.