Concept And Instruction Checking:
Strategies for a Monolingual Classroom

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How do you clarify language and instructions?

We are aiming to teach English in English

1. We need strategies to introduce and clarify language and instructions **without using students' native language**.

2. We need to help students by providing structure, so they can 'fill in the blanks' and **contribute with their own knowledge and strategies**.

3. We need to ensure that students have **truly understood**, not just that they *seem* to have understood or *think* they have understood.

4. We need to use **simple language** for these clarifications. The purpose of this is not to test understanding, but to assist with it.

How do you know a student understands the task?
Ask questions!

Instruction Checking Questions

Writing ICQs

1. Be certain of what you want students to do.

2. Consider what students might not be clear about.

3. Consider the different stages of your tasks – do students understand the progression of tasks?

4. Consider which skills students should or should not be using – should they be making notes or not? Should they be using a specific structure?

*Turn these prompts into **simple** questions!*

Instruction Checking Questions

1. *How much time do you have for the activity?*

2. *Who will you talk to? How many people will you talk to?*

3. *What will do you when you're finished? What will you do after ____?*

4. *Are you writing? Are you talking?*

5. *What language will you use? What will you say?*

6. *How many questions are there?*

Students have a lot of prior knowledge!
They can provide a lot of language if given guidance – preventing reliance on Japanese

Strategies for eliciting:

- Make extensive use of **synonyms** and **antonyms**.
    What is the opposite of ___?

- Use simple definitions in English.
    'Diversity' means many different types of people are included.

- Use **visual aids** for new vocabulary and grammar, e.g. **timelines**.

At all stages, try to refer this back to the students using **concept checking questions**.

How do you know a student understands the language? Ask questions!

Concept Checking Questions

Writing CCQs

1. Be certain about the language you are using.

2. Choose an example sentence!

3. Find the core concepts being addressed by your language and example.

4. Prepare simple questions that can address these concepts.

5. Use the simplest language possible – and not the same language as the example.

*That's **the city which** I visited last year.*

Defining Relative Clause

- Relative clauses give context to a main clause.

- The relative pronoun 'which' is not used for people, but for objects (and also animals).

- Which can be substituted with 'that' (less formal), 'where' (for places) and 'who' (for people).

That's **the city which** I visited last year.

- Relative clauses give context to a main clause.

- Cover the relative clause.
"Do we know anything about the city?"
(No – there is no context)

- Indicate the relative clause.
"What does this part of the sentence describe?"
(The city)

"Can I say 'which I visited last year' by itself?"
(No – it needs the main clause)

That's **the city <u>which</u>** I visited last year.

- The relative pronoun 'which' is not used for people, but for objects (and also animals).
- Which can be substituted with 'that' (less formal), 'where' (for places) and 'who' (for people).

"Does 'which' describe a person or a thing?"
(A thing)

"What word would we use for a person?"
(Who)

"Can we use a different word here?'
(Where or That)

Key Points:

1. As much as possible should come from the students, not the teachers.

2. Use simple language – the questions should be simpler than the target language!

3. Have questions prepared beforehand, and make them as direct as possible.