Writing Strategies for Effective Learning
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Type of Productive Skill: My Friendly Sentence Maker	**Topic:** Lifestyle (Writing simple sentences)
Curricular Thread: Writing	**Sub thread:** Text Production

Strategy 1 My Friendly Sentence

Description

When pre-basic users are asked to write down simple sentences, most of the times, they forget the relevant parts of the sentence.   One convenient way to help them place their ideas in a visible and appropriate way is the use of a visible aid called "My Friendly Sentence".

Beginners can also use this strategy; more structured sentences can be written down following a specific order modeled by the teacher. The order of the sentences can change depending on the level of the student and type of sentences.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

Teachers can use a color coding system to facilitate students' learning. For instance, the teacher can assign a color for each WH questions and a color for the target language. In this way, students will learn the order immediately just by focusing on the color.   Teachers can use cardboard cards, markers or sticky notes. For instance, the yellow color stands for **who** " the subject"; the red color stands for **what** "the verb" ; the green color stands for **to whom, for whom, to what or for what** "the object", the blue color stands for **when** "the time", and the orange color stands for **where** "the place". Taking into account the color coding system, the teacher can design their own yellow, green, red, blue and orange word cards, so students can use them to make their own sentences.

Figure 1. Colour coding scheme in constructing sentences

Who	What	To whom, for whom, to what, for what	When	Where
Tom	Plays	Basketball	every day	at school.

Through the use of "My Friendly Sentence" the students will be able to write a variety of sentences (simple or more structured ones) about familiar topics. Also, they will develop their creativity while structuring their own sentences. Finally, as this activity can be done in groups, they will be able to respect their ideas through negotiations and value their participation.

This strategy can be used from beginners to intermediate students. The materials that the teacher needs in advance is" My Friendly Sentence" template that is attached in Figure 2. This template can be drawn either in paper chart or on the board. As a first step, the teacher writes down the title "Lifestyle" in the circle and show a picture. The teacher asks students to describe the picture and writes down all the students' ideas on the board. After, the teacher writes down the following questions

in the bubble speeches; 1. Who 2. What 3. To whom – for whom ; to what –for what – 4. where, 5. when. Using students' previous ideas, the teacher answers the Wh questions and writes down the corresponding word (subject, verb, object, place, time) in each speech bubble. After that, the teacher uses the words in the bubble speeches one more time and write them down in order in "My Friendly Sentence" box (figure 3). As a result, the teacher ends up with a complete sentence. It is advisable to make students learn each Wh question and its matching color for the students to understand better how a sentence is formed. To continue practicing, the teacher displays another picture and motivates the students to answer the Wh questions. When all parts are complete, the answers are put together to make a complete sentence, and students are encouraged to do this task to enhance their ability to construct sentence.

When the students are used to the new strategy, the teacher can ask students to work in groups of three or four and using the attached template. Two or three pictures to each group can be given to students. Students have to paste the pictures in the circle and answer the questions related to the picture. As the students work, the teacher monitors the activity and helps if necessary. When students have finished answering the questions, they have to write down the final sentence in "My friendly Sentence" box (figure 3). To check students' work, the teacher can use the attached checklist.

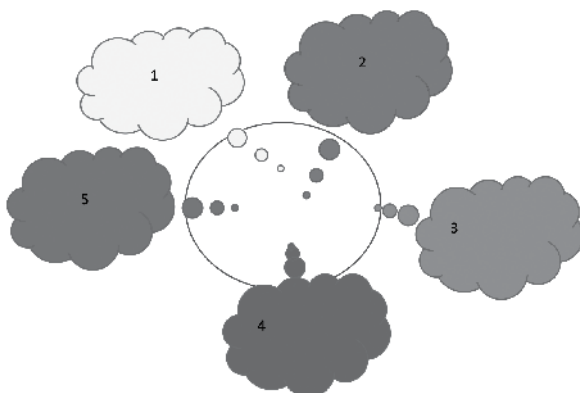*Figure 2. " My Friendly Sentence" Template*

Figure 3.

MY FRIENDLY SENTENCE

Figure 4. " My Friendly Sentence" Checklist

	Yes	No	Observation
Do I follow the word order of a sentence?			
Do I use capitals and periods?			
Do I use all of the words from the bubbles?			
Does the sentence make sense?			
Does the sentence have no spelling mistakes?			

Differentiation

This strategy can be performed in a typical classroom where the class size ranges from 30 to 45 students.   At the beginning of the activity, the teacher can work with the whole class asking for ideas and modelling the activity as well.   It can be done several times. After that, students work in small groups and write down their own ideas and sentences. The teacher walks around the class scaffolding his/her students and giving them feedback. With regard to the materials, copies of the template is

necessary. However, if it is not possible, students can use a piece of paper of their own notebooks and draw the template by themselves. Also, the teacher can draw the template on big pieces of paper; so they can work together and share ideas.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

To perform the activity, the teacher needs markers, pens, pencils, sticky notes or cardboard cards. It all depends on the materials the teacher would like to use and the materials they have at hand. In addition, if necessary, the teacher can use pictures or flashcards of the target words in order to check students' previous knowledge and then start to work on new vocabulary. This is especially important for younger or beginner students. Considering that in most public school, technology like internet access, projectors, and computers are not available in each classroom, the teacher can use the board, markers and pictures to explain what the activity is about and how to accomplish it.

Type of Productive Skill: MY IDEAS ORGANIZER	Topic: Writing paragraphs (Describing my Likes)
Curricular Thread: Writing	Sub thread: Text Production

Strategy 2 " My Ideas Organizer"

Description

This strategy is used in the pre-writing stage. It helps students put their ideas together in a more organized and clearer way. They have the opportunity to split up a paragraph into smaller sections and focus on them to write a paragraph. Thus, students will not feel anxious or confused while writing paragraphs. The teacher should monitor the

activity from the beginning to avoid misunderstanding or committing errors in spelling. Also, teachers can use a color coding system to facilitate students' learning. For instance, the teacher should assign one specific color for the main idea, another color for the supporting details and another for the conclusion. This method can be modified to meet students' needs and levels. For example, for true beginners, the teacher can use pictures with words to make the strategy comprehensible. For beginners, the students can add a detail and a connector, so they end up writing down short paragraphs. For intermediate students, they can add transitional words and more details in order to obtain a long paragraph. Using this organizer, students will be able to communicate and organize their ideas in a clear and comprehensible way. Later, they will be able to write a simple short paragraph about familiar topics (interests, likes, dislikes, and so on). Finally, it will reduce students' affective filter toward the writing process.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

The teacher familiarizes students with the strategy, "My Ideas Organizer", by asking them to design their own template. They use their imagination and creativity to obtain the best one (Refer Figure 4).   They can use white paper, coloured paper, or a manila envelope to make the organizer. The teacher asks students to fold the paper or manila envelope into four parts and draw a square at the center. They write number 1 in the square at the center, and numbers 2, 3 ,4 and 5 are written in the other squares. After labelling the parts with numbers, the teacher writes down the name of the strategy on the board and asks students to guess what it is about. The teacher writes down their ideas and introduces the advantages and importance of the strategy. Later, the teacher hands out two yellow sticky notes to each student and asks them to place the sticky notes in squares 1 and 5.

The teacher may giveout three more sticky notes of another color and ask the students to place them on the squares numbered 2,3, and 4. Using sticky notes will allow students to reuse the template. In square number 1, the students have to write the topic sentence of the paragraph

which is given by the teacher. Later, based on the topic, the students write one supporting sentence in square number 2, 3, and 4. Depending on the level of the students, they will write down either words or simple sentences. Finally, in the fourth square, the students have to write a summary sentence that becomes the conclusion. They can describe their feelings related to the topic they have in square 1. As the students write down the details and concluding sentence, the teacher walks around the class checking and scaffolding students' work. As soon as the students finish, their work can be reviewed based on the below attached check-list. This review can be done by the teacher if the group is small or by the students if the group is big. If the review is done by the students, the teacher can hand out the checklist to each student or project it for the whole class. The students exchange their work "My Ideas Organizer", and as a result, each student will be in charge of reviewing one of their classmate's work using the checklist. After that, students receive back their work and the checklist; they review their work and correct it if necessary. Finally, the students write their final version on lined paper or a small notebook. If the students are using manila envelope, they can keep their writing in the envelope.

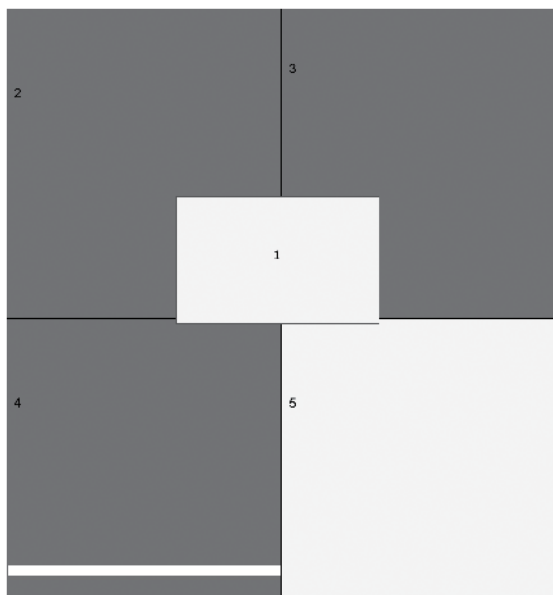*Figure 5. "My Ideas Organizer" Template*

Figure 6. " My Ideas Organizer" Checklist

NAME:	YES	NO
Are the reasons related to the topic sentence? Does each one respond the question WHY?		
Are the supporting sentences (reasons) repeated?		
Does it have a concluding sentence?		
Is the concluding paragraph linked to the topic sentence? Does it express students' feelings?		
Are there any mechanical errors (spelling, capitalization, punctuation) in the whole content?		

Modified from https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Sqcv8QfUV0bjVhdF9WdXpHd0E/edit

Differentiation

Strategy 2 can be used in any classroom setting since the number of students does not affect the planned activities. The students can work individually, in groups of four or five or in bigger groups in a cooperative approach. It all depends on the teacher's preference and the class size. Regarding the materials, the students are the ones who design their own template; they need a piece of paper, colored paper or manila envelope and some sticky notes. Also, the students need a notebook or extra pieces of paper to write down the paragraphs.

Type of Productive Skill: Tongue Twister	Topic: Improving pronunciation – Working with my Tongue
Curricular Thread: Oral Communication	Sub thread: Spoken Production

Strategy 3: Working with my Tongue

Description

High school students are reluctant to use L2 in their English classes because they feel afraid to commit pronunciation mistakes. One way to overcome this problem is to include tongue twisters in English lessons. By using them, students will be able to differentiate English sounds and they will be able to pronounce them correctly.

To start this strategy, the teacher invites students to say some tongue twisters in their native language. The student who says the tongue twister in a fast way receives a prize. After that, the teacher explains the importance of learning tongue twisters in English. Later, the teacher chooses a tongue twister based on his / her students' level. Tongue twisters can be downloaded from YouTube and other ESL websites.

The key to effective use of tongue twisters is repetition. The teacher has to write down the tongue twister on the board and repeats it several times emphasizing the pronunciation of the taught sounds. The teacher can use pictures or pantomime to help students internalize the tongue twister. To practice it, the teacher removes or deletes gradually a part of the tongue twister, so students are challenged to say the tongue twister by heart in the end.

When students have learned how to pronounce the tongue twisters, students are grouped and they need to write down the tongue twister on a chart paper and illustrate it in a silly way. After repeated practice,

students present their works on the wall, and the teacher can choose the best picture. To keep on practicing, the class is divided into two groups. A member of each group receives a ball and is asked to pass it on around the group. The student who has the ball has to say the tongue twister either in a slow or a fast way depending on what the teacher shouts. The teacher uses two magical words "fast or slow". For instance, if the teacher says slow, each student of the groups says the tongue twister slowly, but if the teacher says fast, each student says it in a fast way. Finally, the teacher divides the class in groups of 10 and distributes a ball to each group. The teacher uses a chronometer to check the time. The group that says the tongue twister in a fast and well pronounced way in a short time is the winner. Each time that one student of the group gets confused or mispronounces a word the group will restart until all of the members of the group can make it. The chronometer will never be stopped.

Differentiation

To have students internalize their tongue twister and overcome pronunciation problems, it would be ideal for EFL teachers to introduce a tongue twister on the first day of the week; thus, students can practice it the succeeding days. It will become an engaging warm-up at the beginning of each lesson. The teachers can choose the most appropriate tongue twister that can be found in the links provided before taking into account the students' level. If a tongue twister does not meet their expectations, the teachers can create their own tongue twister. This activity can be carried out in pairs, small groups, and large classes without any difficulty. They are powerful tools that do not need any additional preparation; the only materials that teachers need are their own voice, markers, a board, chart paper, small plastic balls and a chronometer. If there are no plastic balls or chronometer, the teachers can replace them for paper balls or a watch.

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