

Teaching in Challenging Circumstances

Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers

This series, now with over 50 titles, offers practical ideas, techniques and activities for the teaching of English and other languages, providing inspiration for both teachers and trainers.

Recent titles in this series:

Teach Business English

SYLVIE DONNA

Teaching English Spelling

A practical guide

RUTH SHEMESH and SHEILA WALLER

Using Folktales

ERIC K. TAYLOR

Learner English (Second edition)

A teacher's guide to interference and other problems

EDITED BY MICHAEL SWAN and BERNARD SMITH

Planning Lessons and Courses

Designing sequences of work for the language classroom

TESSA WOODWARD

Teaching Large Multilevel Classes

NATALIE HESS

Using the Board in the Language Classroom

JEANNINE DOBBS

Writing Simple Poems

Pattern poetry for language acquisition

VICKI L. HOLMES and MARGARET R. MOULTON

Laughing Matters

Humour in the language classroom

PÉTER MEDGYES

Stories

Narrative activities in the language classroom

RUTH WAJNRYB

Using Authentic Video in the Language Classroom

JANE SHERMAN

Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language

EDITED BY JULIAN BAMFORD and RICHARD R. DAY

Language Activities for Teenagers

EDITED BY SETH LINDSTROMBERG

Pronunciation Practice Activities

A resource book for teaching English pronunciation

MARTIN HEWINGS

Drama Techniques (Third edition)

A resource book of communication activities for language teachers

ALAN MALEY and ALAN DUFF

Five-Minute Activities for Business English

PAUL EMMERSON and NICK HAMILTON

Games for Language Learning

(Third edition)

ANDREW WRIGHT, DAVID BETTERIDGE

and MICHAEL BUCKBY

Dictionary Activities

CINDY LEANEY

Dialogue Activities

Exploring spoken interaction in the language class

NICK BILBROUGH

Five-Minute Activities for Young Learners

PENNY MCKAY and JENNI GUSE

The Internet and the Language Classroom

(Second edition)

A practical guide for teachers

GAVIN DUDENEY

Working with Images

A resource book for the language classroom

BEN GOLDSTEIN

Grammar Practice Activities

(Second edition)

A practical guide for teachers

PENNY UR

Intercultural Language Activities

JOHN CORBETT

Learning One-to-One

INGRID WISNIEWSKA

Communicative Activities for EAP

JENNI GUSE

Memory Activities for Language Learning

NICK BILBROUGH

Vocabulary Activities

PENNY UR

Classroom Management Techniques

JIM SCRIVENER

CLIL Activities

A resource for subject and language teachers

LIZ DALE and ROSIE TANNER

Language Learning with Technology

Ideas for integrating technology in the classroom

GRAHAM STANLEY

Translation and Own-language Activities

PHILIP KERR

Language Learning with Digital Video

BEN GOLDSTEIN and PAUL DRIVER

Discussions and More

Oral fluency practice in the classroom

PENNY UR

Interaction Online

Creative activities for blended learning

LINDSAY CLANDFIELD and JILL HADFIELD

Activities for Very Young Learners

HERBERT PUCHTA and KAREN ELLIOTT

Teaching and Developing Reading Skills

PETER WATKINS

Lexical Grammar

Activities for teaching chunks and exploring patterns

LEO SELIVAN

Off the Page

Activities to bring lessons alive and enhance learning

CRAIG THAINE

Teaching in Challenging Circumstances

Chris Sowton



Consultant and editor: Scott Thornbury



Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-81612-0 — Teaching in Challenging Circumstances
Chris Sowton , Edited by Scott Thornbury
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108816120

© Cambridge University Press 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in XXX by XXX

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-108-81612-0 Paperback

ISBN 978-1-108-81616-8 ebook

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

	Thanks	iii
	Acknowledgements	iv
	Introduction	I
I	Creating a good environment for language learning	9
	1 Teaching in your situation	9
	2 Creating a safe classroom	13
	3 Creating an inclusive classroom	21
	4 Making your teaching student-focused	27
II	Being effective in the classroom	33
	5 Planning lessons	33
	6 Managing lessons	40
	7 Teaching inexperienced students	46
	8 Using different languages	51
III	Teaching large classes	57
	9 Managing the seating arrangements	57
	10 Managing mixed-ability classes	63
	11 Managing mixed-age classes	69
	12 Learning outside the classroom	72
IV	Teaching language skills and systems	77
	13 Teaching receptive skills	77
	14 Teaching productive skills	85
	15 Teaching grammar	93
	16 Teaching vocabulary	99
V	Teaching language without textbooks	107
	17 Creating your own resources	107
	18 Using the local environment	114
	19 Using technology effectively	120

Teaching in Challenging Circumstances

VI	Teaching language with textbooks	127
20	Understanding textbooks	127
21	Managing textbook bias	132
22	Supplementing textbooks	138
VII	Helping students achieve their potential	143
23	Motivating and empowering students	143
24	Checking what students have learned	148
25	Creating assessments	154
26	Helping students perform well in exams	158
VIII	Linking the school to the outside world	163
27	Involving parents and guardians	163
28	Involving the local community	167
29	Bringing the outside world into the classroom	172
IX	Supporting yourself and others	175
30	Caring for your students and for yourself	175
31	Reflecting on your own teaching	182
32	Accessing development opportunities	186
	Glossary	190
	Index	200

Thanks

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Scott Thornbury for his editorial support and guidance in creating *Teaching in Challenging Circumstances*. This is a much better book, and I feel I am a much better writer, as a result of his patient, focused feedback. Scott understood the vision of *Teaching in Challenging Circumstances* from the very beginning of the project, and supported it throughout. Salut!

Karen Momber championed the book at an early stage, and was instrumental in bringing it to fruition. Jo Timerick has been a constant source of support, information and direction throughout the process, and Zoltán Rézműves brought a kindly but forensic eye to the text as editor. To all three, many thanks. I would also like to thank CUP more widely for being willing to publish such a book as *Teaching in Challenging Circumstances*, the commercial benefits of which may not be as immediately obvious as other titles.

This book has been an emerging project in my mind over the past 20 or so years. I am deeply indebted to the many teachers I have had the pleasure to work with in the Global South, from whom I have learned so much. I hope this book has been able to articulate the challenges which you face, and the incredible ways in which you try to overcome them for the benefits of your students. This book is therefore dedicated to Ahmed and Chen, to Hala and Mim Kaji, to Agnes and Binta, and to all those teachers around the world who are doing phenomenal work in sometimes unbelievably challenging circumstances, whose value is regularly not recognized or rewarded as it should be.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife Angie for doing the lion's share of teaching in potentially the most challenging circumstances of all – home-schooling during COVID-19 lockdown. I would also like to thank my daughters Livvy and Amy for (mostly) leaving me in peace in my shed during the writing process, and to all three (plus Wilma) for helping me see beyond the text when it wasn't all going smoothly.