



Peace Corps Ukraine  
**TEAM TEACHING MANUAL**





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## Foreword

The Peace Corps Ukraine Team Teaching Manual is an invaluable resource developed by current Peace Corps volunteers and their Ukrainian counterparts. In response to an idea brought about from the U.S. Embassy Kyiv's Regional English Language Office (RELO), the manual was created out of a need to better define what it means to team teach, as well as to address specific challenges that team teaching can produce.

The chapter material found in this manual was written by an enthusiastic group of Peace Corps Ukraine volunteers and Ukrainian English teachers dedicated to increasing the awareness and success of cross-cultural team teaching throughout Ukraine. It was my great pleasure to work with them and help to compile their contributions, based on their own training and personal experiences, into one complete and detailed guide. It will no doubt be incredibly beneficial to anyone involved in team teaching endeavors here in Ukraine.

This project owes much of its success to Mr. Jerrold Frank, Regional English Language Officer, Kyiv, and Ms. Alyona Sukhinina, Assistant to the Regional English Language Officer. In addition, Ms. Tatiana Gaiduk, Ms. Tamara Prydatko, and Ms. Iryna Krupska, all of Peace Corps Ukraine, provided valuable insights and feedback for the manual.

Thanks to funding and support of the United States Department of State, along with Peace Corps Ukraine, we are happy to have had the opportunity to not only work on this project together, but to also have it published for distribution to future Peace Corps Ukraine TEFL volunteers and their counterparts. We hope that the information in this manual will prove useful to you as you embark on this new educational adventure.

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## Welcome Message from Peace Corps Ukraine

Dear TEFL Volunteers and Ukrainian Counterparts,

We are excited to present to you the long-awaited Team Teaching Manual written by a task force of TEFL Volunteers and Ukrainian counterparts in response to the team teaching needs of current and future TEFL educators in Ukraine.

The Team Teaching Manual is a “how-to” guide for creating a real team of two devoted professionals – a TEFL Volunteer and a Ukrainian counterpart who find themselves together in the realities of the Ukrainian classroom. It attempts to answer the essential questions of how to prepare and perform effective and enjoyable team teaching despite all possible challenges and misunderstandings.

The manual is written for eager life-long learners, enthusiasts who are willing to improve the process of education and appreciate with all their hearts and minds the value of human and professional exchange, cross-cultural enrichment and respectful cooperation in today’s interdependent world.

We very much hope that by using it on the way to successful team teaching, TEFL Volunteers and Ukrainian counterparts will make a great contribution to implementation of the TEFL project goals of professional growth and effective communication.

The Team Teaching Manual is a great example of fruitful collaboration of the Regional English Language Office of the United States Department of State and the Peace Corps/Ukraine. Our particular thanks go to Crystal Bock Thiessen, the manual co-author and compiler, whose TEFL expertise, cross-cultural awareness and encouragement have made the writing process a wonderful experience for PC TEFL Volunteers, counterparts and PC staff. We are also grateful to Jerry Frank, RELO Officer, and Alyona Sukhinina, RELO Assistant, who have taken every effort to make this project a reality.

Finally, the Peace Corps staff wishes you every success in your future team teaching endeavors!







## What is Team Teaching?

Team teaching consists of two instructors in the classroom at the same time, working towards a common goal. The students and the lesson objectives are the focus of both teachers, and they reach their classroom goals by working together to make the lesson an effective and productive time.

Both the PCV and Ukrainian counterpart are actively involved in lesson planning and teaching the class. They share the preparation for each activity, and alternate teaching time throughout the lesson. For example, while the Ukrainian counterpart leads the class in an exercise, the PCV may do any of the following: assist some slower students, write examples on the board to demonstrate what the Ukrainian counterpart is discussing, prepare for the next activity, make sure all students are working as instructed, etc. Both teachers are in front of the class, and/or moving throughout the classroom during the lesson.

Team teaching is a process that requires full commitment from each of the teachers, as well as mutual respect and trust.

## What Team Teaching Isn't

Team teaching does not consist of either the PCV or Counterpart doing the following during the lesson:

- Taking a coffee/tea break
- Leaving the classroom while one teacher teaches material alone
- Running errands outside of the classroom
- Grading copybooks/tests
- Working on the class register/journal
- Extended time on cell phone
- Sitting/standing in the back of the classroom

Team teaching is a constant communication between two teachers, as well as students and teachers during the entire lesson. Full attention should be on the class being taught, and the further development of the students' understanding of the English language.

Team teaching is fun! Relax, enjoy and learn something new about it and your PCV or counterpart every day!

## Benefits of Team Teaching

A successful and effective team teaching relationship will benefit many different groups of people. Besides the three main groups that are directly related to team teaching – the students, the Ukrainian English teacher, and the PCV – the school and the community also benefit from this mutually encouraging classroom setup.

### **The Students**

Students will benefit from this model in four specific ways. First, they are able to observe firsthand the values of teamwork, partnership and participation. For many students, these are ideas that have been talked about in class, but may be more of an abstract concept. When they see the Ukrainian teacher and PCV successfully working closely together, they will witness these ideas effectively demonstrated, and understand that they can actually work.

Second, the students' interest in the lessons will be higher because classes will move at a faster rate with two teachers sharing the lesson. There will be less time for boredom as the class quickly moves from activity to activity, which will in turn lead to fewer discipline problems that are usually created out of students' disinterest.

Third, students' learning styles differ, just as teachers' teaching style differs from Ukrainian to Ukrainian and PCV to PCV. In a team teaching classroom, all students are exposed to two different methods of teaching in the same lesson. If one teacher usually teaches orally, a student who does well with auditory learning will benefit from that teacher's style. When the other teacher begins the next activity, which is more hands-on, students who learn best with kinesthetic learning will benefit greatly. In this manner, students whose learning styles are regularly unmet with one teacher's teaching style may be interested in and successfully learn via the other teacher's methodologies.

Finally, all classes have different levels of student activity, knowledge and understanding, and these multi-level classes can be more effectively taught with the team teaching model and its two teachers. While one teacher leads the class in an exercise, the other teacher is able to circulate the room to help the slower students understand the task, or give the faster students an extra task to keep them busy. When the class should work independently, with a partner, or in groups, both teachers are able to help get students started if they are unsure of the task, answer other students' questions, and review, or correct students' work if they finish early.

### **The Ukrainian Teacher**

One of the biggest benefits for the Ukrainian teacher in team teaching is the chance to practice his or her English skills to a greater extent with a native speaker. The Ukrainian teacher is improving his or her comprehension and speaking skills by communicating with the PCV during the lesson planning stage and within the actual classroom. This also gives the students a great example for why it is important to practice speaking English with a native speaker, even if it may be very nerve-wracking – you get better and more confident over time!

Additionally, a team-taught lesson can move from a teacher-centered lesson to a student-centered one. Therefore, less focus is on the Ukrainian teacher, and they are able to work more in depth with and encourage their students to do tasks themselves. This takes off some pressure for the teacher to always be leading activities, while also giving the students the chance to take on some leadership in the classroom.

## **The Peace Corps Volunteer**

For the Peace Corps Volunteer, the benefits of team teaching are endless, beginning with a faster initial introduction to the world of teaching and Ukrainian schools. Long-term, this also provides a higher likelihood of effectiveness at site because of working so closely together with the teachers. The PCV is constantly transferring new ideas and activities to the teachers who will remain at the school long after the PCV leaves Ukraine.

Furthermore, there is an automatic, built-in support system in the classroom from the beginning of the PCV's service. A Ukrainian teacher who participates in team teaching shows the students from the start that he or she is part of a team, and that the PCV is a fellow teacher and commands the same respect from the students.

team teaching also gives the PCV the ability to be more quickly integrated into the classroom and the school. By being part of a team from the outset, students immediately realize that the PCV is part of the English classroom teaching team, as well as the school's teaching team – rather than just “the American.”

Lastly, training and working with seasoned teachers allows the PCV to quickly learn from his or her colleagues many things that were only theory during training. While one of the reasons a PCV is brought to a school is to bring new, innovative ideas, sometimes it is easy to overlook the fact that Ukrainian teachers also have great activities or ideas that already work in the classroom. The PCV can start with these as a base, and add some “tweaks” to them if and when necessary. The Ukrainian teacher also knows the Ukrainian education systems and its “dos and don'ts,” which is invaluable to the PCV.

## **Mutual Benefits for the Ukrainian Teacher and PCV**

There are four main areas in which both the Ukrainian teacher and the PCV receive mutual benefits. First, there is less pressure for each person to lead and prepare individually for the entire lesson. For the Ukrainian teacher, this may help immensely with the busyness of their usual workload. For the PCV at the start of service, this provides for more confidence in the classroom and an allowance to improve over time, instead of needing to have everything figured out from the start.

Secondly, each teacher is able to play to his or her strength in the classroom, and allow his or her colleague to cover other material that they aren't as strong in teaching. For example, the Ukrainian teacher has been trained in university to teach grammar rules in a way that other Ukrainians can understand. During this part of the lesson, the PCV can make sure the students are following the Ukrainian teacher, or put example sentences on the board. Later in the lesson, the PCV can work on speaking practice with the students while the Ukrainian teacher helps keep non-speaking students attentive and quiet.

Adding to the above point, both teachers can learn how to grow in their weaker areas from watching their partner teach. In doing this, each person can learn and enact new approaches and activities into the classroom, as well as transfer new skills, ideas, creativity and knowledge between each other. Some things that Ukrainian teachers do in the classroom are done because they work well, and the PCV can learn accordingly. At the same time, the PCV has been trained with new, innovative ideas

that can be shared with the Ukrainian teacher and implemented in the classroom. Throughout the PCV's service, everyone who is team teaching is learning from each other, as well as teaching each other.

Finally, both teachers will be able to spend more time on teaching the class because less time will be spent on disciplining the students. With an extra teacher moving through the room throughout the entire lesson, students quickly realize that they will not be able to misbehave while the lesson is going on – there are now two pairs of eyes watching their every movement.

## **The School**

It goes without saying that the school(s) in which there is a successful PCV and Ukrainian teaching pair will benefit greatly. First of all, the transfer of skills from the PCV to Ukrainian English teachers and vice versa serves as free, ongoing professional development over a two-year period. This is something that would be impossible both financially and time-wise for any school to be able to provide under regular circumstances.

In addition, having a team teaching situation encourages creativity through exposure, as well as a generation of new knowledge and knowledge-seekers who have the opportunity to be educated under a unique system such as team teaching.

Finally, any new activities, teaching methods, and skills used in the classroom will remain with the teachers and many times with the schools long after the PCV has finished his or her time there, which is an excellent and sustainable resource.

## **The Community**


- a. Development of future leaders in the classroom
  - Students learn teamwork and leadership through English in the classroom
- b. Sustainability of continuing new teaching methods and activities via Ukrainian English teachers and their students
  - i.e. community projects and fundraising, etc.

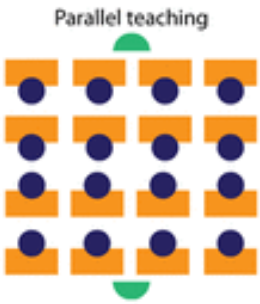



## The Six Team Teaching Methods


Team Teaching Approach	Class Set-up	Definition
1. One Teach, One Observe	<p>One teach, one observe</p>	<p>One instructor leads the class in the lesson, and the other makes observations on student engagement, topic content, classroom management, teaching strategies.</p>
	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Little to no coordination needed in planning</li> <li>- Allows stronger teacher best instruction</li> <li>- Allows newer or less experienced teacher to become familiar with the students, topic, teaching strategies, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doesn't fully utilize each specialist</li> <li>- Can result in authority problems for the observing teacher if used too much (teacher takes on role of student)</li> <li>- Can lead to frustration to Both instructional and observational teachers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This strategy is best used in a limited nature, and only for specific purposes such as gathering data, becoming familiar with a class in a cultural context, and/or allowing an instructor with more knowledge/experience in a certain topic area to have one class of undivided instruction.</li> </ul>		

Team Teaching Approach	Class Set-up	Definition
2. One Teach, One Assist	<p>One teach, one drift</p>	<p>One teacher instructs the class as a whole while the other drifts around the room to help individual students as needed.</p>
	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easy to implement with less planning</li> <li>- Helpful for individual students</li> <li>- Allows stronger teacher to instruct with minimal interruption from the class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does not make full use of each specialist</li> <li>- Can place one teacher into the role of "bad cop."</li> <li>- Too easy to become a habit, producing a teacher and assistant rather than two co-teachers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b></p>		

Team Teaching Approach	Class Set-up	Definition
3. Station Teaching		<p>Students are divided into three or more equal groups to attend different stations. Stations can be used to pre-teach, teach, and evaluate, and can be rotated by either teachers or students.</p>
	<p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each teacher can plan separately if needed</li> <li>- Students can be exposed to similar material, but groups adjusted to level or need</li> <li>- Makes good use of both specialists for instruction and classroom management</li> </ul>	<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requires a lot of planning and timing, as well as a good working relationship between both instructors</li> <li>- Can be difficult to implement depending on class size, room space, and noise level</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each station does not need to be attended by a teacher. One station may be made up of students to do group work or individual pre-teaching/post-review of the content.</li> <li>- Works best when teachers plan together on the same or similar topic, but not always necessary</li> </ul>		

Team Teaching Approach	Class Set-up	Definition
4. Parallel Teaching		<p>Both instructors take half of the class and, in order to reduce student-teacher ration, teach exactly the same content or subject matter.</p>
	<p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilizes both specialists in both instructional and managerial strengths equally</li> <li>- Provides more individual student attention</li> <li>- Smaller groups are easier to assess and manage, and students can have easier access to hands-on activities if necessary.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requires a lot of planning and timing, as well as a good working relationship between both specialists</li> <li>- Can be difficult to use time well</li> <li>- Can be difficult to implement depending on class size, room space, and noise level</li> <li>- Each teacher must be strong in presented material</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Groups can learn the same content the same way, or the same content in different ways</li> </ul>		

Team Teaching Approach	Class Set-up	Definition
5. Alternative Teaching	<p style="text-align: center;">Alternative teaching</p> 	<p>One teacher works with a large group of students while the other works with a smaller group focusing on preteaching, reteaching, or assessment of understanding as needed. The smaller group might also provide a hands-on activity or demo.</p>
	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilizes both specialists</li> <li>- Provides a chance for more in-depth coverage of the lesson</li> <li>- Can provide students with more motivation through smaller group learning</li> <li>- Teachers can plan individually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must create a system for not always pulling out the same group (resulting in labeling)</li> <li>- Need to work with space and noise constraints</li> <li>- Although teachers can plan separately, they must be on the same page as to the goals of each group</li> </ul>
<b>Additional notes:</b>		

Team Teaching Approach	Class Set-up	Definition
6. Tag-Team/Traditional	<p style="text-align: center;">Team teaching</p> 	<p>Both specialists are in front of the class for the given time and provide instruction together. Lessons are planned together, but the delivery may be scripted or spontaneous depending on both instructors' confidence and ability with the topic.</p>
	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrates to students an excellent and respectful working relationship between both specialists</li> <li>- Allows both instructors to provide their perspective on the given topic (good for promoting cultural exchange)</li> <li>- Can allow for two or more strategies to be used/taught at once</li> <li>- Promotes respect, positive exchange, and teamwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requires a genuine and good-natured relationship between the two specialists</li> <li>- Requires a lot of time to plan together; most planning must be utilized together</li> <li>- Both specialists need to be comfortable "sharing the stage" and working in-front of a class</li> </ul>
<b>Additional notes:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Debates, modeling, role-playing, and compare &amp; contrast are good ways to use this model</li> </ul>		



## Overview of Roles & Responsibilities

This manual covers team teaching roles and responsibilities. Here is a brief overview:

### **Develop a Positive Working Relationship:**

Developing a positive working relationship between the counterpart and Peace Corps volunteer is a critical aspect for success. There are many ways to develop such a professional relationship. In Ukraine, one of the best ways is to simply have tea together. The idea is that the counterpart and volunteer should find an opportunity to sit down together after lessons to relax as well as to discuss work.

By developing a close working relationship, counterpart and volunteer create a comfortable platform of trust for discussing their roles and responsibilities. The counterpart and volunteer are showing that they care about one another not only in the sphere of work, but also as human beings.

Also paramount to developing a strong working relationship is joint participation of both parties during the lesson itself. This is most effective when both teachers are at the front of the classroom working together throughout the lesson. However, the most important point here is that both counterpart and volunteer participate actively during the lesson. This is an excellent way to improve the working relationship and as a bonus demonstrates leadership to students.

### **Careful Lesson Planning Together:**

The counterpart and volunteer should agree on dedicating time to lesson planning as a team. This is one of the most essential responsibilities in successful team teaching. Prior to class, both teachers should help to carefully divide the material and time for the lesson. In deciding who will conduct which part of the lesson, both teachers should carefully choose materials, assign roles, and divide time out for the lesson. Thorough lesson planning helps to create a natural flow during the lesson and prevents any logistical disputes that may otherwise arise.

Behavioral issues should also be discussed before the lesson. Here, the role of the counterpart is to inform the volunteer about problematic students and how to manage them. The counterpart's support is especially important. For example, if a volunteer is not informed otherwise, he/she might decide that sending a particularly troublesome student to the director's office is a perfectly acceptable solution to the problem.

One more important aspect of lesson planning together is the sharing of resources. Both volunteers and counterparts might already have many resources of their own, but by combining materials and ideas the team can double their information pool. There are many resources that volunteers receive from Peace Corps and these should be made readily available to counterparts. In turn, counterparts should be ready to provide volunteers with their curriculum plan for each academic year. Additionally, both counterpart and volunteer should participate in the sharing of ideas for lessons. In short, lesson planning demands that counterpart and volunteer maintain a relationship consisting of equal responsibility and reciprocity.

**During the Lesson:**

While working in the classroom, both the counterpart and volunteer should focus on their strengths. For example, the volunteer might help out with students' pronunciation, speaking, and presentation of new vocabulary. The counterpart might focus on grammar and comprehension of new material. The team teaching pair should always share presentation of the above-mentioned skill sets. Just as the counterpart and volunteer work together in developing the lesson, during the lesson itself the pair should always be together.

Both parties should be actively participating throughout the entirety of the lesson. There should never be a point in the lesson when either counterpart or volunteer is simply sitting in the back watching the lesson. For example, if the volunteer is presenting new vocabulary to the class, the counterpart could be setting up the next activity or monitoring the students in the classroom. When confronting behavioral issues, both teachers should be on the same page and support the other teacher's decision. Neither teacher should ever interrupt or contradict the other during the lesson, as this would set a bad example and confuse the students. Throughout the lesson, the teaching pair should aim to demonstrate leadership by working efficiently together as a team. Not only is this a positive example of leadership for the students, but also it helps generate a comfortable environment for language learning.

**Evaluation:**

Discussions to evaluate lessons should be held as soon as possible following the lesson. These evaluations should be done regularly so that both teachers understand what works and what does not work for each other. Both parties should participate equally in feedback. In order to avoid any animosity, criticism should always be cushioned with compliments. Feedback is most beneficial if it is constructive; simply saying that the lesson was good or bad is pointless. When asking for feedback, questions should be open-ended so as to encourage conversation. Evaluating the lesson is an important responsibility of the volunteer and the counterpart because it is a time to strive for improvements. No lesson is ever perfect, so there is always room for both parties to improve.

**Logistics:**

Team teaching involves both parties taking responsibility for logistics. The counterpart should do his/her best to keep the volunteer informed about logistics at school. This includes passing on information discussed during school meetings, letting the volunteer know about changes in the school schedule, and explaining general information about what goes on at the school. In turn, the volunteer should do his/her best to keep the counterpart updated on his/her schedule outside of school. The volunteer should meet with his/her counterpart to discuss projects both school and non-school related. Since the volunteer often has to travel around Ukraine to help out with other projects, he/she should give his/her counterpart the dates he/she plans to be absent from site as soon as possible.

Additionally, both the counterpart and volunteer should invite one another to participate in extracurricular functions. Volunteers should do their best to invite counterparts to Peace Corps related activities including trainings, clubs, and projects. When possible, counterparts should invite volunteers to attend and/or participate in school concerts, holidays, and other events. In this way, both parties help the other to feel included in their respective communities.



## Flexibility and Working Together

### Where to Start

#### Teamwork

One of the greatest effects you can have on your community is learning to work together as a team for the improvement of the education system in Ukraine. Ukraine needs good leaders and individuals who cooperate, learn from each other, and bring out the best in those around them. There is no better way to demonstrate this leadership and working together in a successful manner than through team teaching in the classroom! Teamwork takes practice and is not a skill that is easily developed. The commitment of both teachers to work together can make a powerful impact on those they teach.

#### Questions to Ask Each Other

Meet with your co-teacher (counterpart/PCV) sometime early in the school year. Spend time discussing the following questions and writing down each partner's responses to help build a **solid, professional** working relationship for the school year.

- What are the general expectations or goals each of you has for your classes this year?
- What will your co-teaching classroom look like? (Student desk arrangement, teacher placement, etc.)
- When will you plan lessons together? How much time can you devote each week to planning and communicating for your classes?
- How will your roles be determined and presented so that students see you both as equal teaching partners?
- Take a moment to discuss classroom rules, discipline techniques, tardy policy, etc.
  - How will these rules be enforced?
  - Who will enforce them?
- Discuss classroom routines/procedures for students leaving the room, using their phones, turning in assignments (late), etc.
- Who will be responsible for recording grades and keeping up with them?
- What noise level is acceptable in the classroom to you and your partner?
- What are your pet peeves in the classroom? In other words, what things do you find it difficult to tolerate in the classroom?
- How will you handle multi-level classrooms?
- Who will make tests and quizzes?
- What arrangements will be made if one of you is absent from class? (Will there be advance notice to your co-teacher? Do you have each other's contact information?)

- Do you agree to give your co-teacher as much notification as possible for your absence?
- How much time do you consider to be "advanced notice" to prepare a lesson, change a lesson, or take-over a lesson? (Right before the lesson, a day before, a few days before, etc.)
- Can you agree to give your partner his or her required advance notice time when you need to make a change, have him or her prepare a lesson or take over a class?
- How and when will you resolve differences/conflicts with each other? (verbally, communication log, etc.)?
- How will the two of you celebrate classroom successes together?

### **Expectations for a good working relationship**

Peace Corps has these expectations of counterparts and volunteers with regards to team teaching:

- ⇒ Volunteers and counterparts attend class together. Team teaching does not work unless there is a team.
- ⇒ Volunteers and counterparts work together to plan lessons ahead of time. You cannot team teach without a plan. Know before class begins who is going to present what and who is going to be responsible for what material.
- ⇒ Work as a team. Both teachers should equally divide class time. While one teacher teaches, the other should be involved. For example, he or she can write on the board, display flashcards, or work with other props. He or she can also add important points that supplement the other teacher's lesson. It is also important that the person not teaching pays close attention to the class. This way, when it is his or her turn to teach, he or she will not repeat information and can instead spend time teaching new information that the first teacher did not teach.
- ⇒ Both teachers' views are valuable. Sometimes teachers may have different views, but this can be good, not bad. Students are curious, and want to understand the lesson. Sometimes offering different points of view can help them understand better. They see both of their teachers as authorities and will want to hear each teacher's view. The teachers should present both points of view and explain why the views are of equal value. However, teachers should be careful not to argue in the classroom. Students should see their teachers working together.
- ⇒ Both teachers should encourage and support each other. Team teaching will not work unless the students view both teachers as knowledgeable authorities.
- ⇒ Teachers must give each other responsibility. They should not interrupt each other. They should be sure to ask the other teacher's help when creating the lesson plan. During class, they should be sure to follow the plan.

## **Flexibility**

Flexibility is key to working in a cross-cultural. We all have assumptions of how we think people will respond or should respond. Remember that the way you think is a direct correlation to our own cultural assumptions. Working together in a team gives you the opportunity to consider someone else's ideas. Neither the PCV or Counterpart is wrong; you both approach the classroom differently! Find each other's strengths and use them to work productively together. Be open to trying new things, finding new ways of doing something and be okay with being creative. Remember the Ministry of Education in Ukraine has invited Peace Corps to partner with Ukrainian schools to bring different ways of teaching. Your work together will foster an environment of unity through diversity, which has the power to strengthen many future generations.

### **How to be flexible as a volunteer**

Expect there to be last minute changes for school schedules, projects, festivals, etc. Try your best to accept the fact that as wonderful and creative as your ideas probably are, it will take your counterparts and other Ukrainian colleagues a little longer to realize this. Many Ukrainians are hesitant when it comes to change, but when they see you demonstrating some of your ideas and activities in the classroom, they will likely be more willing to try other new ideas. As they say, sometimes action speaks louder than words. If you are lucky enough to have a counterpart that is open to new ideas from the beginning, run with it!

Keep in mind that your time as a PCV is a marathon, not a sprint. Change will eventually come, it will probably just take a bit longer than you'd like. If you stop and evaluate where you are every month or two, and compare that to where you were, you will see some kind of change.

### **How to be flexible as a counterpart**

You have the unique opportunity to work side-by-side with an American native English speaker! Use this valuable time to be open to new ideas and ways of doing things in the classroom. Remember, the Ministry of Education of Ukraine works in cooperation with Peace Corps to allow Americans to bring a unique perspective to teaching English in the classroom. Peace Corps Volunteers have given up a lot of opportunities for 2 years to build a relationship with you and have a desire to be needed in the classroom. It's okay to do things differently as you work together to find success with each student in the classroom.

What might seem normal and usual for you will be VERY different for a Peace Corps volunteer. Most of the time the Volunteer you work with will not have the amount of years teaching experience as you have, so be patient with them, encourage them, and help them succeed with your students!

## **Tips to strengthening your working relationship**

### **What counterparts can do**

- ⇒ Plan class parties together
- ⇒ Ask many questions of each other
- ⇒ Give many positive comments, if you like something, say so
- ⇒ Invite your volunteer over to your home for coffee/tea
- ⇒ Introduce your volunteer to people you know in your community/school

### **What volunteers can do**

- ⇒ Ask your counterpart over to your home for coffee/tea
- ⇒ Ask many questions about each other
- ⇒ Say "yes" to most invitations to visit with Ukrainians
- ⇒ Give many positive comments, if you like something, say so

### **Creative get-together ideas for volunteers/counterparts**

- ⇒ Go to a Peace Corps In-Service Training (IST) together
- ⇒ American movie night
- ⇒ Ukrainian/Russian movie night
- ⇒ Gardening
- ⇒ Cooking, canning/preserving, baking
- ⇒ Shop at the local bazaar
- ⇒ Karaoke
- ⇒ Attend weddings, festivals, holiday celebrations
- ⇒ Learn a popular song or dance together that you can perform at weddings, festivals and holiday celebration
- ⇒ Travel across Ukraine

## Setting Goals and Expectations Together

When team teaching, it is important that the Ukrainian Counterpart (CP) and Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) set goals and expectations together to ensure a successful relationship in the classroom. Discussing plans for the semester and how each person plans to work with the other will help to ensure a productive professional relationship. When beginning the process of setting goals, remember the “Big 3” of team teaching:

1. **PLAN** together before lesson: set a time each week to meet and plan the logistics of the lesson. Discuss the activities in the lesson, and who will be responsible for each section.
2. **WORK** together during lesson: create a relaxed atmosphere in the lesson. After planning together, both teachers should know what activity they are responsible for and when to switch activities so that the lesson runs smoothly.
3. **DISCUSS** the strengths and weaknesses of lesson shortly after its completion. Without giving and receiving feedback, it is difficult to know where the lessons need to be adjusted.

### Pillars for Success

Counterparts and Peace Corps Volunteers should always support each other, communicate and exchange ideas, strive for understanding, know all stages of planned lessons. In order to have a successful lesson, the CP and PCV should always work together. It is important to support and help each other in difficulties and try to raise each other’s spirits when one is troubled.

The CP and PCV should prepare for the lessons together. While doing that, it is important to discuss every stage of the plan, exchange ideas, and decide which ideas are most suitable for the lesson.

In addition, CP and PCV should communicate as much as possible. In such a way, they will have friendly relations and it will be easier for them to understand each other and express their points of view.

Finally, when CP and PCV work as a team, they should know all the stages of the planned lesson to be sure in what they are doing. It is important to have logically based lessons. Every stage must be connected with the previous and the next one. Co-teachers can choose the tasks, change them in some way, or add something new in order to have interesting and instructive lessons.

### Meeting Prior to Lessons

Before lessons begin, the Counterpart and Peace Corps Volunteer should create their own personal goals, and then meet to discuss their thoughts and create Team goals. When deciding personal goals for the classroom and semester, the following questions can be a guide:

1. What do you expect from your lessons?
2. What do you expect from your students?
3. What do you expect from your CP/PCV?
4. How and when will you and your CP/PCV prepare your lessons?



After setting personal goals, CP and PCV should meet to exchange yhem, discuss the similarities and differences, and use their personal goals to create Team Goals together. This will help to create a foundation in which successful partnership in the classroom can be built upon.

Creating Team Goals is a great start, but each CP/PCV team should review goals periodically to measure success. Before team teaching begins, decide when to meet in order to review the goals created. The standard meetings should be after 1-3 weeks, halfway through the semester, and after the first semester but before the new one. The CP and PCV can decide together which other times they should meet to review goals.

### When Difficulties Arise

Situations may not always be ideal when sharing a classroom and teaching with someone else, so sometimes difficulties will arise. The most important thing to do is *communicate* when these problems arise. Remember that there will be numerous cultural misunderstandings that may pose as problems. When there are problems while team teaching, be sure to review the Team Goals. The CP and PCV should first talk about the problem they are facing, and the possible options. If necessary, choose another method that is more suitable. Also, the CP and PCV team should discuss new ideas for lesson planning. This can improve any difficulties that occur in the classroom. Finally, return to the beginning and really cover all aspects of the “Big 3.” Find the weaknesses in the team teaching relationship and work together to avoid and eliminate those weaknesses.

Good luck and celebrate the small and large successes!



**Homework #1: Team Teaching Partner-Building** -- Meet with your co-teacher (counterpart/PCV) sometime after school over a coffee or tea. Spend some time discussing the following questions and writing down each partner's responses (especially to the questions with \*\* beside them) to help build a solid, professional working relationship for the school year.

1. What are the general expectations or goals each of you has for your class(es) this year? \*\*
2. What will your co-teaching classroom look like? ( student desk arrangement, teacher placement, etc.)
3. When will you plan lessons together? How much time can you devote each week to planning and communicating for your classes?
4. How will your roles be determined and presented so that students see you both as equal teaching partners?
5. Take a moment to discuss classroom rules, discipline techniques, tardy policy, etc.
  - A. How will these rules be enforced? \*\*
  - B. Who will enforce them? \*\*
6. Discuss classroom routines/procedures for students leaving the room, using their phones, turning in assignments (late), etc.
7. Who will be responsible for recording grades and keeping up with them?
8. What noise level is acceptable in the classroom to you and your partner?
9. What are your pet peeves in the classroom? In other words, what things do you find it difficult to tolerate in the classroom? \*\*
10. How will you handle multi-level classrooms?
11. Who will make tests and quizzes?
12. What arrangements will be made if one of you is absent from class? (Will there be advance notice to your co-teacher? Do you have each others' contact information? Do you agree to give your co-teacher as much notification as possible for your absence?) \*\*
13. How much time do you consider to be "advanced notice" to prepare a lesson, change a lesson, or take-over a lesson? (Right before the lesson, a day before, a few days before, etc.) \*\*
14. Can you agree to give your partner his or her required advance notice time when you need to make a change, have him or her prepare a lesson or take over a class?
15. How and when will you resolve differences/conflicts with each other? (verbally, communication log, etc.)? \*\*
16. How will the two of you celebrate classroom successes together?

## Establishing Good Professional Working Relationships

Like all Americans, you want to establish good professional working relationships, whether it be at home or abroad. You should keep in mind that here in Ukraine, you should apply the “try and try again” theory at all times. It takes a while for Ukrainians to “warm up to you.” This is their culture and there is no need to take offense to this. In fact, I didn't even start working with my counterpart until 4 months after school had begun, and when it happened it was a big shock. We had lessons planned two weeks in advance and a PEPFAR training scheduled in the first month of really working together. So what do you do during those 4 months of wandering around your school or organization thinking, “Where do I belong here?” Try to communicate with as many people as possible at your site! For example, if you're shy or your language skills aren't so great, break the ice by baking cookies, drinking tea with your colleagues, and/or bringing chocolate. All of these things tell them that you are thoughtful, open, and ready to communicate. Even bringing your own “work mug” lets them know you are becoming comfortable there and as a result, they'll also feel comfortable. As the second year rolls around, you start to become much busier. However, don't forget the colleagues you don't normally work with all the time. Bake cookies for the holidays or invite them to your projects to continue to show that you're thinking about them.

Take everything you think you know about Peace Corps and toss it away because working in Ukraine is very different from the “I'm going to live in a mud hut” thought bubble you had when you applied. Ukrainians are much like Americans when it comes to professional dress code. In no way, shape, or form is it the same style, but they're very particular about what should be worn at work and what shouldn't. First and foremost, they keep their shoes very clean and you should at least try to do so as well. This is very difficult in the rainy winter months when you're walking through mud to get to school, but keep wet napkins in your bag and do a quick swipe before you walk inside. Some teachers even change shoes when they get to school so maybe this can be an option as well. Clothing styles may be quite different, but you will always notice that they look very nice, clean, and put together. You should observe what the other teachers or professionals are wearing at your site and mirror this as best you can. I know there is no way this is completely possible because you didn't get the dress code memo before you started packing; however, having 6 dress shirts and 3 t-shirts instead of 6 t-shirts and 3 dress shirts will come in very handy. In Ukraine, you'll get much more use out of the dress shirts.

I know what you might be thinking, “Huh! Well! I'm a Peace Corps Volunteer. They asked for an American and they're going to get one!” I completely understand where you are coming from. However, what if Ukrainians came to the U.S. to volunteer, decided they're not going to change for anyone, and dressed in their typical clothing? I think that they wouldn't be taken very seriously thus becoming less effective. The same concept applies to PCVs in Ukraine. Even though we don't care as much about clothes in the U.S., we should be culturally sensitive to the fact that Ukrainians do care about how you look at work. But don't be upset! Ukraine has some funky fashion sometimes and this might be your only opportunity to embrace bedazzled clothes and shiny suits!

One of the most difficult things to do is reach out to other colleagues. Whether it be the language barrier or the right timing, it can be difficult to ask for help. First, start

with something small. Maybe ask the biology teacher if she can look over your HIV/AIDS presentation that's written in the local language. Even if you know all of it is correct ask her to double check the information. This tells her that you respect her profession and her opinion. While she's giving you suggestions maybe you can tell her it's for World AIDS Day and that you have a project you wanted to do and perhaps she's interested. If you start looking for opportunities to speak to people, the doors will just start flying open.

When it comes to working with other community members, things could get tricky. It's possible that your primary site will become possessive and might get a little jealous if you start spending your time at another organization. Sometimes it's best to keep it to yourself until you begin to build relationships at your secondary site. I'm not condoning lying to your primary site, but you don't always have to tell them every detail. Or if they find out, it's possible to tone it down a little bit by saying something like, "Yeah, I went and introduced myself because the students really wanted to have an opportunity to meet an American and speak with a native speaker." If and when you begin to start planning larger projects with your secondary site and you notice your primary site is becoming upset, try to include them as much as possible. It's best to tell them from the beginning about the bigger project so you can ask if they want to be involved. If the answer is, "yes," this is perfect! You'll have two sites working together on a project. If no, then you can say you at least tried and hopefully they can respect your project work.

As for your counterparts, hopefully you'll be lucky enough to work with an active and motivated counterpart. However, even with the most involved counterparts, you'll notice they go through phases where they become less active or seemed to have lost their spark. This is normal and there's no reason to worry. Sometimes we as PCVs go through this same phase. On the other hand, we are often super aware of what our counterparts are doing and overly sensitive to their lack of motivation or activity. This is real life and there are going to be ups and downs. Give your counterpart a break and try to cheer them up with chocolate. You have no idea what a conversation over coffee and chocolate can do in Ukraine. If you're in the middle of a big project try to make it a little easier for them by making their tasks more understandable. Write down exactly what you need from them and when. If you're trying to get a project started, make small descriptions of several projects and look them over with your counterpart. Ask which one they would be more interested in doing. If you feel that things are not getting better, maybe you should try reaching out to other colleagues or a different organization. Never give up on your counterpart though. Even if you never do a project with your original counterpart, as in my case, you should always invite them to your projects or offer to help them. Remember that we are often the only American they will ever meet and we want them to remember our kindness and hard work.

There are so many different ways you can establish good working relationships in Ukraine. These are only a few suggestions. You'll have plenty of opportunities to speak to your neighboring volunteers about their experiences in working relationships. Just don't be in such a rush. You'll be very excited when you first come to site, and you'll have all these great ideas, but stop and smell the roses or eat some borscht. Be patient. You need to really spend a lot of time at site to understand what they need, and you often need these work relationships to brew for a while before you can start

any big projects. When these relationships do start to blossom, it'll be the greatest feeling in the world. Remember, good things take time.

### **Tips for Establishing Good, Professional Working Relationships:**

- Communicate with as many people at site as possible.
- Observe work attire and try to wear the same or similar.
- Keep your shoes clean and your attire neat.
- Keep your primary site involved or aware of your secondary projects, but carefully.
- Look for and follow through with excuses to speak to your colleagues!
- Never give up on the relationship with your counterpart(s).
- Don't be oversensitive to counterpart inactivity phases.
- Be patient!



## Making Time for Planning Together, and Planning Tips

If there is one thing that students notice in a lesson, it's when you are unprepared. Taking the proper time to plan is extremely important for each and every teacher, but it becomes even more important as a team teaching pair. You will approach each lesson with a completely different idea of how the lesson will go, and obviously during the lesson itself is not the time to figure it all out. "Winging it" is a lot easier as a single teacher, but it cannot be successful as a team teaching pair. The lessons could seem disjointed, confusing, and chaotic.

As a team teaching pair, you have a huge opportunity to make lessons unlike anything your students have ever seen. You can have more games, more interactive activities, and more activities outside of the book that are just too time consuming for individual teachers to have in lessons. This takes creativity, hard work and a lot of compromise - all of which require time!

### PCV's Emphasize Student-Centered Teaching

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will be working during your two-year service to help implement student-centered teaching in Ukrainian schools. Teachers are very busy people, and therefore it's common to use the textbook. The textbook saves time, but sacrifices results. A lesson centered on the book gives students a lot of opportunities to zone out and not learn anything. Only one part of their brain is engaged, and a lot of students get very bored working out of the book the whole lesson.

It's important to create an interesting lesson, and that's something the book alone just cannot do. The textbook is a guide and can help you toward creating great activities, but the book doesn't produce interesting lessons. It also often is for a skill level that your students do not yet possess. Students often equate the textbook with boredom and a hatred of learning English, so a surprise of learning English outside of the textbook is really welcome. Your creativity and knowledge of your particular classes and their abilities will contribute to making a successful, interesting, engaging lesson plan, which will in turn produce big results. Again, this takes a lot of time.

### Free Time Differs Between PCVs and Ukrainian Teachers

Volunteers tend to have a lot of free time. They live mainly alone, and have a lot of flexibility with their schedules. On some days, volunteers say they don't even leave their apartment because there's nothing to do. Free time is not extremely valuable to volunteers as a result; many find themselves always looking for something else to do to fill the time. Usually volunteers work at school in the morning, and have free evenings just to plan lessons for the next day. Additionally, volunteers work 18 hours per week and often have free lessons at school. There's plenty of time for PCVs to spend with their friends, and plenty of time to keep in touch with family over Skype or other Internet services. Of course, a volunteer is not free all the time, but as a rule they have more free time than their Ukrainian counterparts.

The typical Ukrainian teacher does not have a lot of free time. There is a lot of pressure for teachers to do lesson plans, learn new methodology and innovation in teaching, and grade copybooks. All of this is outside work and professional

development besides what they do in the classroom every day. Teachers also need to create new materials for lessons every day to make learning fun and understandable.

Teachers look at all of this work that they have to do, and then they also have to consider their family and friends. Most English teachers tend to be women, and many teachers are married with children, so in addition to being a great teacher they also have many responsibilities at home: houses to clean, children to take care of and help with homework, food to cook, etc. On top of all of this, every person desires some time to be with friends, and there is often not enough time even for that. Work seems to always take priority in the life of a teacher, and everything else is in the background. There's a lot of external and internal pressure on teachers to do a great job in school at all costs. Free time is scarce; therefore, you'll find that free time of teachers is extremely valuable to them. Not every teacher will be willing to sacrifice this free time for even more lesson planning and school work.

You will find that teachers have limited free time. It's common for teachers to have free time late at night, and sometimes this has to be the time for lesson planning. Occasionally a teacher will have free time at school, so if there is a free lesson, it may be possible to plan with a teacher at that time. However, as any other part of the day, free time at school is utilized for planning, checking copybooks, grading papers, homework, etc. Ideally, planning will happen after lessons in free time, but sometimes there is no other option. Additionally, consider that many teachers teach 7 lessons in one day, so after a full day of work, they are exhausted and only want to rest. This can prove to be quite the challenge when trying to plan together.

When comparing the free time of volunteers and teachers, it's important to take a few ideas away. First of all, it's the responsibility of volunteers to be flexible around the schedule of the perpetually busy Ukrainian teachers. However, it's reasonable to have expectations of teachers to find free time and communicate well with their volunteer to coordinate planning. Some resistance to extensive planning is likely to be encountered because of the teachers' busy schedules, but it's important to work that out with both parties. As long as volunteers have reasonable expectations of teachers considering their free time, and teachers put the effort forth to plan together, the working relationship should be successful.

### **Planning Time Can Also Be Relationship-Building Time**

It will become very obvious that a good relationship between the teacher and the volunteer is necessary for planning and doing other work. There's a good chance for mutual benefit of both parties through a productive planning relationship.

Planning doesn't have to be just about planning. It's also possible to combine it with socializing and other types of cultural exchange. Therefore, a volunteer can get extra exposure to Ukrainian culture, and the Ukrainian teacher can learn about American culture. Additionally, planning can become a social outlet for the volunteer and a chance to establish a more friendly relationship between the teacher and PCV. It's possible that there will be fundamental disagreements of teaching methodology and ideas for planning, but as the relationship strengthens between the teacher and PCV, both parties will be more receptive to the ideas of each other. It becomes easier to compromise and to reach a point of mutual respect.

With a good relationship, both parties will be more willing to share their interesting ideas for lesson planning. Maybe these ideas will not be traditional and approved by typical methodology, but they could achieve good results. The more comfortable the relationship is, the more willing both parties will be to pitch new ideas that could be the beginning of a great new activity. Additionally, such creative thinking requires creative use of the English language. It's also important to remember that this experience of struggling with the language and being creative with the language is a really good learning opportunity for the teachers in practicing their language skills. The more comfortable teachers become with their language skills, the longer and more productive planning will become. It's also an added benefit to the teacher of improving their language skills while planning, giving an added incentive to plan thoroughly and for an extended time.

Another great result of a good relationship is the ability to lesson plan under any circumstance. With a more formal relationship, there is a need for a more formal time for lesson planning. This reduces flexibility of both parties. On the other hand, with a good relationship, it's okay to plan when there are other things going on. If the relationship between PCV and teacher is good, the teacher isn't shy about getting things done that he or she needs to get done. For example, maybe during planning, a teacher can feed his or her child dinner or continue with other responsibilities, which have not yet been taken care of. This allows planning to happen even when the conditions are not perfect. Sometimes there is a choice between this type of planning and not planning at all, so it's very helpful to have this possibility. This is a way for a teacher to be more flexible in regard to planning, and only a result of a good relationship. Volunteers should make it clear that they don't mind the multi-tasking or distractions that happen during lesson planning to ensure that the Ukrainian teacher doesn't worry.

As you can see, a good relationship is important to the success of planning. Flexibility on both sides is vital, and a good comfort level between both people is equally important. The ideal situation is when the Ukrainian teacher and the American volunteer are good friends, because this opens up many new possibilities both for finding free time for lesson planning and being creative for the good of the students. There's a Russian saying: "Совмещать приятное с полезным," which means "Combine enjoyment with productivity."

### **Planning Before and After Volunteer Arrival Is Very Different**

Typical lesson planning often involves looking through the book and the national curriculum, choosing the materials, making a lesson plan, and preparing visuals. When working independently, it is possible to do this work at school or at home, whenever there is any free time. Preparing visuals takes a lot of time, but teachers frequently use all of the exercises from the books and pre-prepared copybooks for practice. Ukrainian English textbooks seldom focus on speaking and student-centered methods, but instead are more focused on reading and translation, learning new words, and grammar.

As for expectations, it is reasonable for Ukrainian teachers to be apprehensive about getting a new and inexperienced volunteer, and this can have an impact on planning. Teachers may be worried that they cannot communicate well in English, and thus



lesson planning and communication could seem difficult and scary. Teachers may also have the expectation that the volunteer will come to the community to practice speaking exercises and pronunciation. Teachers will be briefed on many different ways in which they can work with the volunteer. Many teachers may expect changes to be small in the classroom, and for volunteers mainly to play with the students or just do extra activities.

Eventually, after a volunteer arrives, communication becomes much easier. The planning takes a lot more time because it requires working together, but it results in bigger success in the classroom. The results of working together are generally much better than teachers expected in the beginning. Additionally, students in the community probably had big expectations of the new foreign person and how interesting it would be to have a foreigner, so by this time students will have gotten used to the volunteer. Furthermore, English will become more interesting with the presence of an American volunteer.

From a PCV's perspective, many volunteers will be new to teaching. The first exposure these volunteers have is the Pre Service Training (PST). There are only 1-3 lessons per week, and every lesson takes hours and hours to plan. Everything is written neatly in the required form, everything is timed out, and a lesson is more like a performance of the lesson plan. Everything is a well-oiled machine, and there is always lesson plan tutoring to discuss every aspect of a given lesson and the pros and cons of certain activities.

It's difficult for a PCV to imagine how everything is going to change at site. Of course, volunteers realize that having 18 hours a week is going to change everything, but it's impossible to understand the difference between PST and planning at site. Volunteers will likely still expect to have objectives listed for every lesson, to plan every activity, and to speak in-depth about every activity.

In reality, however, this doesn't happen. For some teachers, in-depth planning will happen with great conversation about activities, but volunteers should also expect some teachers to want to plan in 5 minutes and that's all. There won't even be a complete list of activities, much less timing for each activity and a standardized format of warm-up, new vocabulary, practice, application, and wrap-up. Volunteers have a great deal of adjustment when coming to site because working with different teachers means every lesson will feel very different. Volunteers have to be flexible and try to keep the results high regardless of the planning style of different teachers.

### **Case Study of Successful Team Teaching Pair**

Now, let's examine the results of a team teaching pair -- a volunteer and Ukrainian teacher. When the volunteer arrived, he taught with this Ukrainian teacher in the 4th form, twice per week. The biggest change from the beginning was getting out of the textbook as much as possible. They concentrated more on speaking, and using as many educational games as possible in the lesson. These games were applicable to the lessons they taught, and were self-created. The purpose of this was to increase confidence in the pupils as well as make them generally more interested in English. This pair planned twice per week, and the planning of the lessons took much more time than before -- about two or three hours. However, these lesson planning times

served as a chance to practice speaking English, become better friends, and plan for class all at the same time. Usually they would also drink tea and have some candy. At times, they even prepared food together and had fun outside of the context of lesson planning.

This good relationship and the result was successful. Extensive planning led to better results in the classroom. For example, at the beginning of the volunteer's second semester working with the Ukrainian teacher, they got a class that had switched English teachers every year, and the children were not confident in their English ability. One pupil specifically thought she could not speak English, but after the first English lesson she was very surprised; she went home and told her mother, "Mom, I can speak English! I can! I thought I couldn't, but I really can!" Her mother then called the Ukrainian teacher to let her know of how much her daughter enjoyed the English lesson. The volunteer and teacher were very pleased that they were able to build the confidence of the students and make them enjoy English more than before. This served as a great example to the pair of the power of positive reinforcement instead of tearing pupils down if they don't understand. English classes became more of a supportive environment in which pupils could try their best and be successful.

Additionally, to increase knowledge of the pupils and increase interest, the pair decided to create an English club after school. The club was completely optional, so attendance really reflected how much pupils enjoyed the lessons and club. The teachers taught what the pupils wanted to know in English club, so it was also empowering for the children to be able to choose what to learn in English. Attendance has steadily increased with time, and at the most recent English club, 36 pupils attended from the 4th and 5th form. As a result, another English club was formed because of strong interest and a large number of pupils. Once, five pupils waited for about 90 minutes for the teachers to finish a meeting before their club could begin. It became very evident that pupils really enjoy learning English, largely because the volunteer and teacher found the time to plan really well, have a good relationship, and create an atmosphere for the children that was conducive to learning.

### **Helpful Planning Tips**

- Do not teach without planning ahead of time -- just observe the lesson if necessary, and work together to plan ahead for the next lesson.
- Encourage creativity in planning instead of following the book.
- Take the time to plan so that English is interesting.
- Become friends with your colleagues wherever possible.
- Combine planning/school life with conversation/real life.
- Make a good plan so there's no need to change it at the last minute before class (keep a notebook of your lessons).
- Create a lesson that allows both parties to support each other.
- Have ideas about your lesson ahead of time for teachers with little time. In addition, have some no-prep activities already prepared just in case.
- Don't be shy. It is OK if you challenge them in a respectful manner. Don't hesitate to offer suggestions or ideas.
- Regularly give and receive feedback!
- Teachers should be able to ask volunteers for help, and vice versa.

**Homework #2: Avoiding "Glorified Aide" Status**—Work on the following worksheet together with your volunteer/counterpart. In team teaching, it can be easy for one teacher to “dominate,” leaving the other teacher to be in more of a position of an aide (which is what we want to avoid in team teaching). Think of things one teacher can do in the classroom while the other does something else.

When one teacher does this...	The other can do this...
Assigns groups for work	
Gives directions	
Explains a grammatical point	
Works with a small group	
Writes on the board	
Collects class work	
Speaks in the students' native language (not English)	
Helps an individual student	
Gives directions	
Checks for comprehension/understanding	
Explains a new concept	
Demonstrates a point or dialogue	

## Common Challenges in Team Teaching, and How to Handle Them

There are, of course, many benefits of using collaborative team teaching (CTT) in the classroom. Having two minds planning and leading the lessons allows students to connect with different personalities, be introduced to various teaching styles and experience an opportunity for more communication. However, along with the benefits of CTT will also come a number of challenges. It is important to recognize these potential challenges and be prepared to overcome them with your co-teacher. The following are common challenges that have been cited when discussing CTT, along with some advice for how to deal with these situations.

### **Differences in teaching styles**

It is difficult to work with someone whose teaching style and philosophy differ from your own. When you put two teachers together to facilitate a lesson and work together over the course of a school year, it is likely that there will be differences in methodology and styles between the two teachers. These differences are to be expected; however, keep in mind that success in the classroom is not dependent on similar philosophies between the teachers but rather on the open-mindedness of the teachers and willingness to compromise.

### **Time**

It can be time consuming to plan a lesson in conjunction with your team teaching partner. Often times the non-native speaking teacher (NNST) will have various professional, personal and community responsibilities leaving little time for them to sit down and plan lessons with the volunteer. However, by agreeing upon a set day and time to meet each week, the teachers will make this meeting a part of a weekly routine.

### **Inequality in the classroom**

When CTT is introduced in the classroom, it can be awkward to establish equal roles for the teachers. The NNST has an established role as an authority member in the school, classroom and even in the community thus making it compulsory for the students to obey the instructor. On the other hand, the native speaking teacher (NST) has come to the community as a volunteer and the role of this individual may not be completely understood by the students. It is important to create an early precedent and show that the teachers are equal in the classroom: sharing responsibilities, taking on equal roles and working together to conduct the lessons.

### **Distribution of work and roles**

Before beginning team teaching, it is vital that the parties involved sit down and discuss the roles of each teacher and how the work will be distributed. It must be decided whether the NNST and NST will split the class time in half, tag team throughout the lesson, or if one teacher will teach a specific set of lessons per week solo while the other teacher teaches the rest of the lessons on his/her own. Deciding this beforehand will save both teachers from feeling like they are taking on a disproportionate amount of work and feeling taken advantage of.

Furthermore, the roles during the lesson for each teacher must be explicitly defined as to avoid undermining or tension during the lesson. Decide prior to the lessons who will take charge of classroom management and how, who will handle grammar, how the teachers will approach mistakes, how to signal that the activity is finished, etc. By establishing these roles and guidelines prior to the lesson it will allow for a smooth flow of the lesson and will portray the teachers in a professional manner as co-facilitators working together.

### **Grading & co-assessment of students**

Grading is a very important topic for volunteers in Ukraine. Many volunteers do not feel comfortable giving out marks at the end of class as is often done in Ukraine. It should be decided first and foremost whether the NST will be responsible for grading, and if yes, how. If the NNST expects marks to be given, then the pair should develop a rubric of grading together so that the NST can accurately assess and grade the students. If the NNST does not require marks to be given by the NST, an alternate method of grading should be agreed upon (perhaps assignments to be graded outside of the lesson, or a speaking task to be administered during the lesson). The method of assessment and grading is not as important as the necessity to decide before the lesson so that both teachers are on the same page and neither is caught off guard.

The challenges that can be faced during CTT are multiple, however through respectful communication and willingness to compromise, any situation can be rectified and effective team teaching can lead to outstanding results.



## Example Team Teaching Challenges Scenarios

### Scenario 1

During the team teaching lesson, PCV Adam practices new vocabulary with the students of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. One boy is noisy. Adam says to his counterpart: “Natalie, make him be silent. I can’t work in such situation.”

**What’s wrong?** Adam forgot that both teachers are equal in the classroom. Instead of working together as a team to fix the situation, Adam created a good cop, bad cop situation. He became the fun guy while Natalie became the bad guy.

### Scenario 2

During a team teaching lesson a PCV and his counterpart start talking about their favorite films. They forget about their students and about the lesson outcomes. The students are bored; they are not interested in their talk.

**What’s wrong?** The PCV and counterpart strayed from the lesson outcomes to have a personal conversation. They did not put their students’ needs above their own.

### Scenario 3

During the lesson, a Ukrainian teacher is explaining the grammar material “Degrees of Comparison of Adjectives”. A PCV interrupts the teacher and says that he is wrong and that his knowledge isn’t perfect. The teacher brings some grammar books with explanations; they compare British and American English. The students don’t know who is right. The Ukrainian teacher is disappointed; he doesn’t want the students to hear this talk.

**What’s wrong?** This conversation should have taken place after class and not during the lesson. The PCV questioned the teacher’s authority and made him look unqualified in front of the students.

### Scenario 4

A PCV Brian and a Ukrainian teacher Olena, who isn’t his counterpart, prepare for a lesson. Olena suggests doing an activity that Brian doesn’t like. He tries to explain to her politely, but she’s furious and says that she knows what is best for her students.

**What’s wrong?** Both the Ukrainian teacher and Brian have both been honest and open. However, they disagree. Flexibility on both of their parts could help them decide upon a reasonable outcome.

### Scenario 5

A PCV Tom was practicing the vocabulary on the topic “My House”. At this time, a Ukrainian teacher Maria was having lunch in the canteen. Then, it was Maria’s turn to explain Passive Voice. Maria wasn’t in the classroom. Tom didn’t know what to do. He couldn’t explain grammar. He played some vocabulary games, but the lesson was unsuccessful.

**What’s wrong?** Clearly, the teaching team assigned parts of the lesson based on the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher. The main problem lies in the fact that Maria was not present during the lesson and did not complete her previously planned and agreed upon responsibilities. Tom did a good job at being flexible in this situation.

### **Scenario 6**

A Ukrainian teacher named Oksana didn't agree to have some activities in the lesson, which were suggested by Andy. Andy was angry. He went to the staff room and told other Ukrainian teachers that Oksana's knowledge of English is awful and she can't be a good teacher. Moreover, he phoned Peace Corps and complained about her.

**What's wrong?** Andy criticized Oksana in front of staff and in a very unprofessional manner. He was clearly upset, and should have spoken to Oksana before speaking to anyone else. Andy never gave Oksana a chance to defend herself or compromise.

### **Scenario 7**

At the beginning of the school year a PCV Billy discovers that he doesn't have some class books and workbooks to work with. The books are authentic and expensive. Ukrainian teachers refuse to help him. Billy pays 600 hryvnyas for books.

**What's wrong?** Ukrainian teachers should help the PCV find resources, and they did not help Billy in this situation. If the books were not available, the Ukrainian teachers could have offered to share materials or let him borrow the book.

### **Scenario 8**

A PCV named Kelly walks into school on December 25th looking a bit under the weather. One of the lessons is unsuccessful, and Kelly breaks into tears. After the lesson, her counterpart criticizes her mistakes and offers no praise.

**What's wrong?** The counterpart forgot an important American holiday and didn't take Kelly's emotions into consideration. She could have waited until a later time when Kelly was more emotionally available to respond to criticism.



## Team Teaching Dos and Don'ts: Tips for the Ukrainian Counterpart

You have been waiting for this event for a long time! At last you have a PCV at school. It's a great chance for you to see a real American, to overcome language barriers, to speak English fluently, to learn new methods of teaching, etc. You believe that your students will know English better soon, you'll have fun, and the lessons will be more interesting. Maybe you can have a rest during your lessons and the volunteer will conduct them instead of you... **STOP!** A PCV is not here to do your job. A PCV is a wonderful chance for you to cooperate with a native speaker. This is a chance to work **TOGETHER!** It won't always be easy! So, be ready to work hard during the next two years. If you want your team teaching lessons to be effective...

DO	DON'T
<p><b>- be open and honest</b> Americans don't teach in the same way you do. If you have any questions or concerns, don't be afraid to just speak about them openly.</p>	<p><b>- yell at students</b> Your students won't be the same as earlier, because the presence of a PCV is new for them. They may be talkative/silent. Be patient and respectful.</p>
<p><b>- tell about the national program and curriculum</b> Everything is new and weird for your PCV. Tell your PCV everything that will help him or her to plan successful lessons.</p>	<p><b>- be afraid to tell your point of view.</b> If you think that something you're going to do won't work in the classroom, tell your PCV. It is better to tell beforehand than after the unsuccessful lesson.</p>
<p><b>- be ready to spend more time on planning lessons at first</b> Telling the numbers of exercises your PCV is expected to do during the lesson is not enough. Remember, you are co-teaching and two minds are better than one. Sit and brainstorm ideas together, and specify the responsibilities for every task in the lesson.</p>	<p><b>- be a "slave" of a textbook</b> You can follow the national program without doing every exercise in the book. Use your book as a tool to help you accomplish the national program, but mix in your own ideas and feel free to change or edit the text if necessary. And don't forget, you can be very successful indeed if you work with authentic books and texts.</p>
<p><b>- design new activities</b> Break the rules and try something new in the classroom. If you have a text, that doesn't mean that you must simply read it, translate, and answer the questions to the text.</p>	<p><b>- criticize in front of students.</b> It's important not to discuss problems with co-teaching or the lessons in front of students. It undermines authority and is unprofessional. After the lessons or at the end of the day, discuss problems and solutions together as a team. A failure with co-teaching lies with both parties. Make time to work through the rough parts so that the students receive the best that co-teaching can provide.</p>
<p><b>- be helpful in getting resources</b> If you have a printer or you can draw well, help your volunteer with this. Also,</p>	<p><b>- think you are the only authority in the classroom.</b> There are two <b>equal teachers</b> in the</p>



<p>make an effort to help your PCV find a computer, the library, and other available resources inside and outside of the school.</p>	<p>classroom. No one is more important and no one is less important. Decide upon a discipline program with your PCV and stick with it.</p>
<p><b>- be active</b> Don't put everything on the volunteer's shoulders. Suggest ideas and work hard together.</p>	<p><b>- use your volunteer merely as a recorder</b> Of course, it makes sense to have the native speaker read texts aloud. Keep in mind that PCVs have so many more ideas to offer in lessons.</p>
<p><b>- discuss the learners' outcomes</b> Discuss what you want your students to know at the end of the lesson. When you do this, it will be easier to create activities that will accomplish these desired outcomes.</p>	<p><b>- forget your PCV is away from home</b> Some days your PCV may seem sad or distant. He/ she may be homesick, especially when working during American holidays. And sometimes seemingly easy tasks for local people are difficult tasks for a PCV. Something as minor helping a volunteer find a pharmacy when sick goes a long way in making the PCV feel more at home.</p>
<p><b>- accept a PCV's teaching style.</b> PCVs have a variety of teaching styles, and every teacher has a unique style. It can seem strange at first. Make sure not to compare this American teacher with another American teacher.</p>	<p><b>- be alarmed when your PCV doesn't answer the phone immediately</b> Cell phone culture is quite a bit different in America. If a PCV does not answer the phone the first time, it does not necessarily mean that there is an emergency. Your volunteer may simply be busy or taking a nap. If you need your PCV to call back soon, simply send a text asking the PCV to contact you as soon as possible.</p>
<p><b>- give the PCV a chance to be herself/himself.</b> A PCV isn't your student, so don't dictate to him/her how to conduct lesson or how to behave among children.</p>	
<p><b>- support and praise.</b> A PCV is a person who is far from his family and friends. If you see that he/she manages to do something well, don't be shy to give support and praise!</p>	
<p><b>- experiment in the classroom</b> Use new activities (PCV will help you), draw pictures, make up poems, act. Be an example for your students.</p>	

## Team Teaching Dos and Don'ts: Tips for the PCV

You have just come to a new site. New school, new people, new students... You're struggling with the long last names, you cannot read the schedule even if your life depended on it, and you certainly don't understand what most people are saying. It's intimidating to say the least. REMEMBER, you have a lot to offer to your site. You are a native English speaker with many creative ideas. You may feel you don't know where to begin, but your counterpart can help you in many ways.

DO	DON'T
<p><b>- spend time together outside of class</b> It's easier to work with someone you know well. Make time for tea, cookies, and conversations. The time you spend working on your personal relationship will contribute to success in the classroom environment.</p>	<p><b>- be rude while correcting students' mistakes</b> Students sometimes make silly mistakes or pronounce words in a funny way. Don't laugh at them, just help!</p>
<p><b>- ask questions</b> If you don't understand something, ask as many questions as you need. If you feel you have problems with language and you need to speak with the director or another teacher who is not your counterpart, ask your counterpart to translate or help you. You may feel your questions are stupid, but you don't be afraid to ask them anyway.</p>	<p><b>- be afraid to suggest new ways of doing something</b> Ukrainian teachers have been using the same texts for a while, and want fresh ideas. You can help by providing innovative and creative ideas, and providing advice and encouragement.</p>
<p><b>- be patient</b> Some students won't study English even after a year of work. You should remember that teachers open the door, but students enter themselves. People who want to know English will work hard from the very beginning.</p>	<p><b>- correct teacher's mistakes in the classroom</b> English is a foreign language not only for students, but for teachers as well. If you correct their mistakes in the classroom and students will hear this, they may never respect the teacher.</p>
<p><b>- identify strengths and weaknesses</b> Talk with each other about your strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. Sometimes, this is hard to do, but your lessons will become balanced so that the strengths are the highlights and the weaknesses are minimized.</p>	<p><b>- do the students' work (e.g. read the text)</b> Give them opportunity to work as much as possible.</p>
<p><b>- speak at the level of students' understanding</b> At the beginning, it is hard to determine students' level of comprehension when you are speaking. Listen to your counterpart and follow his/her lead. Also, ask to see the previous texts studied so</p>	<p><b>- refuse to work with undisciplined students</b> Some students are difficult, but you cannot ask them to leave the classroom. If the discipline plan is not working, think of new ideas. Perhaps it is a multi-level class that would benefit from different</p>

<p>you know the words students have learned in previous years. Also don't forget, at the primary levels, you may need to use the local language sometimes.</p>	<p>level tasks and assignments. Maybe changing the seating arrangement can halt the disruptions. Sometimes, just a little bit of positive reinforcement or motivation will guide students towards better behavior. Keep trying and don't give up.</p>
<p><b>- be flexible</b> Schedules change very rapidly in Ukraine. You may show up for classes to find they were cancelled. You may be teaching two classes at one time because a teacher has suddenly become ill. Take a deep breath, and work with your counterpart to find the best adjustments. Also, have some backup plans already prepared for these likely scenarios.</p>	<p><b>- just stand there</b> Your Ukrainian counterpart will seem very busy at times. He/she will be running to and from the cafeteria, grading papers, calling parents, holding parent teacher conferences, etc. Don't watch your counterpart struggle. Ask if you can assist in some way. The smallest help can make a world of difference.</p>
<p><b>- decide on a grading policy</b> It can be hard to know how to evaluate students on a daily basis. Work together with your counterpart to decide on a grading scale. Then, both teachers must grade consistently and fairly.</p>	<p><b>- be silent when there is a problem</b> Communication is key with team teaching. Did your counterpart hurt your feelings? Did something confuse you? Tell your counterpart. He/she cannot read your mind, and being angry or upset without saying so helps no one. Otherwise, you may go home upset over something that was merely a miscommunication. And no one wants that!</p>
<p><b>- discuss a discipline plan</b> Share your ideas for a discipline plan, and listen to your counterpart's ideas. Then, combine your ideas and compromise. Find any discrepancies, and fix them quickly. Classroom management is one of the best tools for success. Make it a priority.</p>	<p><b>- be afraid of failure</b> Try new things with your counterpart. Team teaching is the safest environment to test out that new idea you thought or read about. Think of possible problems that could occur and plan accordingly. But give everything at least one chance. If it is a new and unfamiliar task for students, make sure you do it several times before deciding it is unsuccessful.</p>
<p><b>- recognize your counterpart has a personal life</b> Counterparts can be so helpful, but sometimes you might forget they need a break. Of course, they care about you and want to help. But they also have families, outside tutoring jobs, and hobbies they want to pursue. Remember, everyone needs a break now and then!</p>	

## Cross Cultural Aspects and Team Teaching

Team teaching always involves the interaction and fusion of two people, two styles, and two mini-worlds. While this is true for team teaching all over the world, it is even truer when the teachers come from different cultures. For Peace Corps Volunteers in Ukraine working under the TEFL project, this is an everyday reality. Here, we will outline major cultural differences, explain why they may lead to conflict, offer solutions, and list the benefits of cross cultural teaching.

Before delving into team teaching specifically, we should look at the differences in Ukrainian and American worldviews. For example, Americans emphasize the importance of the individual against the collective, but Ukrainians emphasize the individual as a part of the collective. Americans tend to focus on hard work and individuality as tools for success in the world, but Ukrainians seem to focus on qualities of human relations, such as kindness. In America the students learn and the teacher facilitates, but in Ukraine the teacher teaches and the students absorb knowledge.

To understand team teaching in Ukraine, you must understand how a Ukrainian view of human relations differs from an American view. Most importantly, Americans can typically separate professional relationships from friends, but Ukrainians feel it is very important to be friends with your colleagues. In America the term “friend” relates to our closest companions as well as mere acquaintances, but in Ukraine it signifies a deep, long-standing relationship. As a physical representation of this, when greeting a friend you can just say “hi,” but in Ukraine you always shake hands in addition to saying “hi.” On a more general level, while in America it might be enough to interact with colleagues at work, in Ukraine it is important to have relations inside and outside the classroom.

Unfortunately, these cross-cultural differences create situations in which a Ukrainian teacher may not work well with a PCV (or vice versa). Ukrainian teachers are used to working alone and may not want to share their role as sole teacher. Further, a Ukrainian teacher might think a PCV is not qualified, due to their lack of official education or classroom experience. Moreover, Ukrainian teachers might not have time to team teach, with other responsibilities including their kitchen garden, tutoring, and personal and family life. Lastly, there are some teachers who may feel ashamed and embarrassed by their level of English, even if they speak English well.

Although these cross-cultural and personal reasons might make Ukrainian counterparts reluctant to team teach, there are some strategies PCVs can implement to overcome cross cultural barriers and develop real relationships. On a basic level, it is advisable to spend more time together out of the classroom, walking together, sharing tea after school, watching movies in English, or just chatting. You can also spend more time in school, for example talking about the successes or struggles you face in your lessons. To show you trust and value your teaching partners, do favors for them and don't be afraid to ask for a favor in return. On a more practical level, find a way to lesson plan together that is convenient for both partners, whether in school or after school by phone, texting, or Skype. If you have a disagreement cultural, so a solution requires patience, flexibility, and understanding.

This might seem like a lot of work, but there are significant benefits to teaching cross-culturally, both for students and teachers. Your pupils will have greater access to knowledge because they have representatives from two cultures guiding them. The Ukrainian counterpart can improve his or her English by communicating with a native speaker while simultaneously widening his or her perspective on teaching, cultures, and global relations. The American PCV has a partner who can help with translation in the classroom and who understands the Ukrainian culture and educational system.

There are many significant differences between American and Ukrainian culture that influence team teaching, but these differences are not insurmountable. Improving your relationship with your counterpart is a way to bridge cross-cultural barriers and ultimately helps you to do a better job crossing those boundaries with your students in your lessons. To achieve this, however, you need to spend time with one another inside and outside the classroom. To be a real “team” requires a real relationship with each other, regardless of your culture.



## Ten Tips for Effective Team Teaching with Non-counterparts

During service as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine, a Volunteer is ideally assigned to partner with one primary Ukrainian teacher at his or her site. This person is known as a counterpart. However, it is clearly stated in the TEFL Ukraine framework that volunteers in Ukraine should strive to not only improve the English abilities of Ukrainian youth, but should also work with Ukrainian teachers to develop and implement classroom practices which utilize the communicative method and share new methods with the local teachers. In order to achieve this goal, PCVs are asked to team-teach with multiple teachers at site so that best practices may be shared between all parties. The counterparts may understand the role of the volunteer and Ukrainian teacher in the classroom better than others, due to the formal training they have received. Additionally, by being an official counterpart, they have shown a willingness to introduce new methods and techniques into their classroom. Therefore, these tips are designed to help non-counterparts better understand their role in the Peace Corps Ukraine TEFL framework, and to improve their work with volunteers. Here are ten tips to help mitigate challenges in team teaching with non-counterparts.

### **1. Agree on methodology in advance:**

When establishing an agreement with a new team teaching partner, be clear regarding the teaching style that you will implement. Determine whether you will divide the class period in half, share the lesson, or take the entire lesson a pre-defined number of times per week.

### **2. Use non-verbal communication:**

It is recommended that you use the initial planning meetings with the non-native speaking teacher (NNST) to also establish methods of non-verbal communication to ensure that lessons flow smoothly and without confusion (whose turn it is to speak, or who is doing the next activity). Signals such as eye contact or a subtle head nod will contribute to effortless transitions.

### **3. Be patient and flexible:**

Often, the NNST is busier than the native-speaking teacher (NST). Teachers' meetings, parents' meetings, field trips, family duties and community responsibilities are just a few of the things that may take a significant amount of their free time, thus leaving little time for lesson planning for the end. It is important to set aside a time to meet with the NNST. Establishing a set time in their schedule will significantly reduce stress later on.

### **4. Work together, from start to finish:**

Insist upon meeting according to a mutually determined schedule from the beginning of the semester until the end of the year. Make it clear that you will plan and work together so that each party can share new knowledge and practices. Your role is **not** to be handed the outline of the semester and to plan on your own for the duration of the course.

### **5. Establish equal roles in the classroom and in the relationship:**

It is important to present a "united front" to the students so that they have a clear understanding of the roles of their teachers. The teachers should be seen as equals in

the eyes of the students, and they should also treat one another as equals and in a professional manner.

**6. Avoid undermining:**

One of the worst things to do in a team teaching scenario is to undermine the NNST in front of the class. When you challenge your partner's method, knowledge, or style it shows friction between the team. Not only will undermining the NNST in front of the students leave them feeling confused and uncertain, but it will also potentially damage your relationship with each other, personally and professionally. To avoid this situation, be sure to create an action plan for when you do not agree with something that the NNST says or does in class, so that you may resolve the issue, without causing additional problems.

**7. Admit when you are wrong:**

In most cases the NST will be the in-class expert on the English language; however this does not mean the NST is always correct. There may be an instance where the NST is incorrect. It is important to recognize any mistakes and move on.

**8. Play off one another's strengths:**

Know the strengths of each teacher and distribute roles and responsibilities accordingly. Teaching grammar is especially difficult, and may require heavy translation. Therefore, it is perhaps better to allow the NNST to lead grammar exercises, while the NST focuses on speaking and listening.

**9. Provide honest feedback:**

Give honest feedback, and insist that honest feedback be given to you. There is a good chance the NST teaches fewer lessons with non-counterparts, and therefore it is important to really work with these other teachers and to evaluate each individual lesson. The time spent with individual teachers may vary, and thus regular feedback is very important.

**10. Communicate:**

As in any relationship, communication is of the utmost importance. By creating a respectful, efficient, and trusting relationship with all teaching partners, it will be easier to achieve good results and have a lot of success. Work on improving communication levels every single week and, in the end, the outcomes will be much better.



## Working With a Counterpart Who is Not Interested in Having a PCV

As a new TEFL Peace Corps volunteer, the beginning stages of acclimating to a new school and site can be terrifying. Some counterparts are always available for their volunteer, but it is possible to have a counterpart who just is not interested in working with a PCV. It may be challenging at first, but it is possible to overcome any challenge.

### Counterpart's Point of View

Some counterparts just will not be interested in working with a Peace Corps volunteer at all. Other counterparts may appear to dislike the idea of working with a PCV, but just need time to adjust to the reality of working with an American. There are various reasons a counterpart may seem cold to the idea of having a PCV, but many times it is because of fear, work, or resentment.

First, many counterparts will still have those initial feelings of fear. Some counterparts have never met a foreigner, so it can be a shocking experience. It is also likely that a counterpart is embarrassed of his or her English skills. As English teachers, they are certified experts, but working with a native English speaker can expose their weaknesses in the language. Also, a counterpart just might be nervous because he or she doesn't know what to expect or to do. Even with the brief training counterparts receive, it is a completely new experience to work with a PCV.

Another reason counterparts may be reluctant to work with Peace Corps volunteers is because of the workload. Some counterparts may think it is just too much work to cooperate with PCVs. Also, team teaching is a completely new concept and some counterparts might not understand the value of it, or even why they should try to work with a PCV. There is also the possibility that some counterparts just want a break from teaching.

Finally, a counterpart may be unwilling to work with a PCV due to feelings of resentment. Sometimes, the school Director just chooses a teacher to be a counterpart for a Peace Corps volunteer, even if the teacher did not want that role. In addition, students tend to love having a fun and friendly PCV that is not always responsible for giving marks, so the counterpart feels like the "bad guy" in the classroom. Not to mention, being an active counterpart is a lot of work, and not all teachers are ready to take on so much responsibility.

### Overcoming Challenges

It will be difficult as a Peace Corps volunteer to adjust to a new life in Ukraine, but a PCV's service is about overcoming all the challenges that spring up. As with everything else, it will be a bit of a struggle to overcome this major problem of working with a counterpart who is not interested in having a PCV, but it is possible, and there are ways to overcome triumphantly. It can be done by communicating, understanding, starting small and eventually branching out.

### Communicate

Communication is the best place to start to try and improve the relationship with a counterpart. First, it is a great idea to spend some time building a personal



relationship. Often, good working relationships blossom from good personal relationships. Drink tea together, talk about family and life outside of school, and start to care about a CP on a personal level. Also, try to compliment CP on English skills, and ask for a little help in Ukrainian or Russian. This eases the nerves of the CP and gives them a chance to be the expert. Finally, explain *everything*, always. Explain what you want in clear and simple terms, and maybe several times. Even PCVs are guilty of smiling and saying yes when something is unclear in the local language – don't expect CPs to always understand. It is important to always be open and honest about needs and feelings. There are so many cultural differences that it is difficult for counterparts to understand what a Peace Corps Volunteer is thinking.

## **Be Understanding**

Counterparts have a busy life. There are lessons to plan, meals to cook, rooms to clean, husbands (or wives) to help, and gardens to plant. Planning lessons and projects with a PCV is just one more thing to worry about, so it may not happen as quickly as hoped. Again, team teaching and doing projects are totally new concepts, so it might just take time to feel comfortable with sharing a classroom and working on projects with a PCV.

## **Start Small**

Try asking for help in small ways. A little help here and there can build up to a working relationship. In the classroom, maybe a counterpart can be responsible for some warm ups or good resources to use in class. Or if a CP is the main teacher in class, ask to be the one to bring in some extra materials. When it comes to projects, they might be really overwhelming for new counterparts, so start by giving only small roles in projects. Even small participation can be rewarding, and this might motivate a counterpart to help more in the future.

## **Branch out**

Even if an original counterpart is reluctant to help, there are other options. Try to meet new teachers in the English department and see what work they are willing to do. There are other teachers that want to work with Peace Corps volunteers, but it is the PCV's job to find them. Don't be shy! Find these teachers that want to teach and work together. The best way is to sit down, drink some tea, and discuss life and work with other teachers that are around.



## Conflict Resolution

We all have experienced the feeling of not being able to get along with other people. It is inevitable that everyone will experience feelings of frustration, hurt, anger, and confusion when dealing with other people. Soon we begin to realize these feelings are moving us into the area of "conflict" with another person or with other people.

### **What exactly is "conflict"?**

Conflict is a disagreement between two or more individuals/groups of people. In its most basic form it is two differing opinions or points of view, which are opposed to each other. If conflicts are not dealt with appropriately, they may escalate further.

In a cross-cultural conflict situation this is usually exacerbated or perpetuated by cultural differences among people involved in the conflict. A person's culture gives meaning to his or her worldview, moral code, judgments, and perceptions about others.

This section focuses on three areas of conflict: Conflict Progression, Overcoming Conflict, and Steps for Forgiveness.

### **Understanding Cross Cultural Conflict**

In any examination of conflict, it is of utmost importance to consider the viewpoints and backgrounds of each party involved, including which culture each party comes from. This is important because culture is the lens through which we view most things, including conflict. This is especially important in the Peace Corps. In working with our counterparts/PCVs and other colleagues, we inherently face a different culture every day, and when conflicts arise, they are often made complicated by added layers of cultural misunderstanding.

So, what is the best way to combat this potentially harmful misunderstanding and prevent compounding an already poor situation in times of actual conflict? The first step lies in understanding how both Americans and Ukrainians handle conflict.

### **How Americans Handle Conflict**

Americans tend to handle conflict in very issue-centered and direct ways. This means that Americans do not usually focus on personality when a conflict arises. Ultimately, it is easier for an American to separate the conflict at hand from the person or persons with which this conflict is shared. This is not to say that conflicts are not deeply upsetting to Americans, or that Americans do not take relationships into consideration, but rather that Americans can generally box off a conflict as only part of a relationship, and not the entire thing.

Americans also prefer to resolve conflicts face-to-face, in a direct negotiation style. If a conflict arises, Americans are likely to bring it up with the person in question directly, confronting them in a way that forces honest and productive conversation. If this doesn't work and a large conflict does ensue, Americans will try to patch up the damage via negotiation. The optimal solution for an American in a conflict situation is

known as a “win-win”; Americans generally look for ways in which both parties can mutually benefit, while simultaneously maintaining a professional working relationship after resolution of the conflict.

This goes hand-in-hand with the direct conflict management style mentioned above: Americans usually feel comfortable sitting down with the person or people in question in any conflict, discussing honestly and openly the situation at hand, and trying to find a solution through prolonged conversation. They can do this in a way which usually does not affect the personal nature of the relationship, but instead focuses solely on the issue at hand. This may happen even before a true conflict emerges, as the stereotypical American is very proactive in detecting and deterring conflict. In short, Americans would rather talk directly with someone with whom a conflict is developing than wait until the conflict becomes manifest. And once a conflict is manifest, Americans strongly prefer give-and-take negotiation styles.

### **How do Ukrainians handle conflict?**

Ukrainians tend to handle conflict in a way distinct from the methods and conflict indicators mentioned above. This stems from a deeper cultural difference between Ukrainians and Americans, specifically in the workplace. Namely, the Ukrainian culture is one highly based on personalities and personal relationships. Whereas Americans tend to be more task-based and can separate people from situations, Ukrainians tend to work with people and then, only secondarily, with situations.

As a result of the importance placed on personality, Ukrainians are very unlikely to directly bring up a conflict before it becomes openly evident to all. A direct, face-to-face conversation with someone who is aggravating a Ukrainian is seen as disrespectful, and perhaps more harmful in the long run to the relationship than the conflict in and of itself. Instead, Ukrainians may turn to a third party to discuss these preliminary problems without the presence of all parties involved, bringing in social undercurrents that the other person involved in the conflict might not ever be aware of.

When a conflict does become apparent to all involved, a direct, face-to-face negotiation style may be much less successful with a Ukrainian than with an American. Ukrainians are indeed more likely to go to third parties, such as friends or mutually respected and neutral colleagues, to help settle the conflict at hand via informal negotiation between all parties involved. This is seen as saving the personal relationship between two parties in conflict by allowing a third party to make the “tough decisions” regarding who is at fault in a conflict and what should be done as a result.

Additionally, conflicts in a Ukrainian context will rarely be quickly understood in their entirety, as there are likely to be many undercurrents, unexpressed emotions, and other components of the conflict that are not vocalized by either party. Thus, it may even be difficult to know, especially for an American, that one is in a conflict to begin with!

However, if Ukrainians and Americans take these general characteristics of cultural reactions to conflict into consideration, and try to apply this knowledge the next time that there is a problem in the workplace, resolution of the conflict will be smoother, as

there will not be any additional and unneeded cultural misunderstandings to further add to the situation.

## **Conflict Progression**

### **I desire**

All conflicts we encounter deal with some sort of desire. Teachers, for example, desire for their class to pay attention and participate in the lesson; they may desire excellence from their students, or even desire good behavior amongst students. The conflict often begins when the desire of one person interferes with another person's desire and that person is unwilling to discuss it. Remember, a desire is something both teachers will have regarding how the classroom is structured and how to work with students. The next stage of conflict is when the desire becomes a demand.

### **I demand**

Unmet desires, when not effectively communicated, have the potential to become demands.

- "I spend so much time working on lesson planning, can you grade all the copybooks?"
- "I've been teaching a lot lately, can you teach a few more classes for our school?"
- "I've worked hard on preparing these materials would you mind using them in the lesson today?"

There is an element of validity in each of these statements. However, if our desire is not met, these attitudes can become a vicious cycle. Over time the more we feel as though we deserve something the more we begin to demand it. We begin to think we are entitled to it and we are convinced if something does not change we cannot find enjoyment in the way things currently are.

### **I am disappointed**

Maybe you find yourself beginning to get a little frustrated or disappointed that things are not working out the way you want them to. You begin to have thoughts about the situation, which just aren't true.

- "How can they say that given the position I am in?"
- "It seems to me they don't care as much as I do"
- "I'm trying to work together, but they just don't want to"

At this stage of understanding conflict, it is important to begin to share your thoughts and feelings to the other person. Let them know how you feel about what is going on and that you know it is important to find a compromise. If at this stage you don't communicate with each other you will likely move into judgment of the other person.

### **I judge and I punish**

In this phase of conflict progression nothing turns out well! The person who is upset begins to pass judgment on the other person. They might begin to presume bad

things about the person's character or personality. In this stage the person who has been hurt begins to think of ways to punish the other person for their behavior. This person might have less desire for face-to-face interaction, and become less engaged in working with the other person. Many tactics come into play when two people from different cultures begin to quarrel.

It is the desire of Peace Corps Ukraine that the relationship between the volunteer and counterpart be one of productive cooperation for the betterment of the school and the community. If such a situation should get to this stage please understand your actions and attitudes at this point might become harmful to your school and community. We encourage both parties to commit to recognize that this is happening and to commit to spending time addressing such issues. As a last resort, Peace Corps is committed to helping both parties communicate and to be able to move past the issue (whatever it is).

## **Overcoming Conflict**

### **Overlook an offense**

There will be conflicts during your Peace Corps service, which is expected as you bring new ideas and new ways of doing things to the table. People don't always see things the same way. If you find yourself in the middle of a conflict, you can choose to either continue to make a big deal about it, which entails a little more time to work through it, or you can choose simply to overlook the offense. Not everyone is perfect and each teacher deals with various challenges in working together in his or her own way.

It is important to realize if you do chose to overlook the offense you are committing to MOVING FORWARD, not bringing it up, and instead LETTING IT GO. Some things are just not worth the effort of having a long drawn out conflict over.

Remember, you both want the same thing: to see pupils succeed in their understanding and handling of the English language. The more you work together, the more impact you can make on your school and community for the future!

### **Reconciliation**

If you find the conflict is too serious or has damaged the relationship you need to move towards resolving the issue. The first step in reconciliation starts with YOU! You are the only one who can control your thoughts, feelings, emotions and actions. Even if you feel you have been wronged, take the first step by owning up to your actions in the conflict. It is a real sign of maturity to be able to say that you are contributing to the conflict and ask for forgiveness. One of the greatest benefits of team teaching is to show the the next generation what it means to work together. Maybe you don't always see things exactly like your counterpart or volunteer but you both should be fully committed to the relationship.

Allow your reconciliation to be a starting point to really begin to better understand each other and open your eyes and ears to hearing about another culture. Reconciliation can be a powerful way of learning how to effectively communicate cross-culturally.

Most importantly LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN! What are they saying? What matters to the other person? How can this situation make us stronger? How can we move forward?

## **Negotiation**

It is important to note in this section that although you may have worked through the relationship issues, there is still the need to work through material issues. In working through specific material issues, it is essential that each person should seek to reach a settlement that satisfies the legitimate needs of BOTH individuals. As a PCV, remember negotiation is a key element in Ukrainian society and to work together to find a solution that works for you both. As a Ukrainian counterpart, look and listen to better understand what the PCV is trying to say.

Your understanding as a counterpart is crucial to working through a conflict. Peace Corps volunteers are ready and willing to help however they can. They know their capabilities and desire to be heard and respected when shared. If a satisfactory negotiation cannot be reached, please seek out the help of your Regional Manager, who is a great resource to help you both to better understand the needs of the other.

## **Taking ownership for your wrongdoing in conflict**

Conflict begins to resolve itself when each individual uses certain statements when communicating effectively to the other person. Start by making "I" statements and eliminate "you" statements.

- |                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ● I was hurt when...            | I find it difficult to... |
| ● I feel as though...           | I'm sorry I...            |
| ● My impression is such that... |                           |

## **Steps for admitting wrong-doing/misunderstanding**

- **Speak to everyone involved.** Don't speak with anyone else about the other person until you have talked to the person one-on-one. Go first to the individual out of respect for the relationship and demonstrate value for the person by speaking with them.
- **Do not excuse your wrongdoing.** You are responsible for you! You cannot control the other person. Your step in admitting wrongdoing demonstrates you are open, honest, and care about others. Use "I" statements and not "you" statements. Make sure you are doing everything you can to get the relationship on good terms again. Two years of a bad relationship is ultimately a disservice to the students and community as a whole. You owe it to them to show that not all problems are the other person's fault.
- **Speak specifically, actions and attitudes.** Be specific about what you said, how you acted, what you did. Generalities in working through a conflict make things more confusing and leave room for more disagreements. Focus on the

specific situation and what happened. After it's been resolved, MOVE ON, LET IT GO!

- **Express sorrow for those who were hurt.** Even if you don't understand how they were hurt by what you said or your actions, the least you can do is sympathize with them. Working in a cross-cultural environment such as the Peace Corps, you won't always understand why or how things exactly happened, but you do understand that everybody has feelings. Respect your colleague's feelings and emotions and work to understand better for next time how to handle such difficulties.
- **Accept consequences.** Sometimes there are consequences to our conflicts, misunderstandings, communication, etc. Be ready to accept the consequences for the conflict and once those consequences have been dealt with consider it a learning curve for next time. If the consequence does not seem appropriate to the situation seek further counsel from Peace Corps.
- **Change future attitudes and actions.** The longer you work with a PCV or with a Ukrainian counterpart, the more experience you will gain in changing your attitudes and actions in working together. Everybody is unique, no one is perfect but each of you have committed to a two-year working relationship, which WILL require you to CHANGE.
- **Ask for forgiveness.** Anytime someone asks for forgiveness, give it freely! Part of working together is to understand there will be conflict and once it is worked through FORGIVE and let go! Enjoy the journey and embrace the differences.

### Steps for Forgiveness

After forgiveness has been given, you must agree to the following four things. Remember, forgiveness is an act of releasing someone of a wrong they have done to you. The following steps are sure to bring about a reconciled relationship, which can continue to have a great impact on students and your community.

1. **Agree to not dwell on the incident.** Once you forgive someone you agree not to bring it up EVER again. You may have to forgive a PCV or Counterpart multiple times during your service--that's okay! Nobody is perfect. Agree not to bring it up again and again. This will have a major impact on your service.
2. **Do not bring up the incident and use it against the other person.** How can you influence a generation to change if you constantly bring up criticisms from the past? Your jobs as PCV and Counterpart are to encourage one another and see each other succeed to the best of their ability. Talking behind the other person's back and seeking to demoralize each other is not what Peace Corps Ukraine is all about. You are a team and team members build one another up.
3. **Do not talk with others about the incident.** Of course everyone has things they are learning about each other and no one does everything right all the time. Find ways to share the good things that have come from your relationship

with the PCV and Counterpart. The PCV and Ukrainian counterpart have a great opportunity to share with others how to effectively work cross-culturally and to model working together for those who are watching.

4. **Do not let the incident hinder your personal relationship.** Know that as you spend more time together everyday the relationship will continue to grow. True growth and understanding of working with others does not come easy. Begin to see conflict as a way to grow personally, change professionally, and seek reconciliation privately.

**Be okay with forgiving others and be appreciative to those who forgive you!**





## Giving and Receiving Constructive Feedback

### Introduction

The key point of sharing experience and providing feedback is to make teaching more effective. Team teaching gives ample opportunities for giving and receiving feedback. This is important for both teachers (volunteer and counterpart) as well as for students. The ones who benefit from teachers' mutual feedback most of all are students. If teaching is student-oriented and feedback interaction conducted between a volunteer and a counterpart is positive and constructive, this means that successful communication has been established. This is the right way to develop ideas for feedback. First, observing one another provides a chance to see classes "from the outside". Being only one teacher in the classroom, you cannot get a view of how it is working. Second, feedback is a communication event that makes your relationship with a volunteer (counterpart) stronger and closer. However, feedback is also a fragile notion that might lead to misunderstanding and rivalry. It's all connected with people, their psyches, their needs, wants, goals, their self-perceptions and their fears. Therefore, some simple things have to be kept in mind while giving and receiving feedback.

This section offers a framework for feedback, which serves well for the post-observed lesson interaction with a Volunteer (Counterpart) and allows maximization of the benefits of the time spent together in the classroom. It also includes some points about class observation and upcoming negotiation process.

### Stages (Steps) of Feedback

Providing feedback is inseparably connected with class observation. Thus, these two processes can be roughly divided into three major parts: pre- feedback/observation, in-process-observation/feedback, and post-observation/feedback activities. The first part deals with preparation for giving feedback and developing certain rules you will keep to when discussing the classes observed. The next stage, i.e. actual class observation, gives grounds for further feedback, so it is important to take some notes for assessing the techniques used in the classroom. The final, after-observation stage, the feedback itself, is about discussing strong and weak points of a lesson conducted.

#### Step 1: Preparation

At the outset, it helps to establish between the two participants what the time limit is and how the process is expected to develop. Sit down together and discuss an ideal lesson. By doing this you will know what each of you sees as the main goal of teaching. Then in the process of feedback you might get a clearer vision of what has been produced. Establishing the process is a form of signposting that allows the teacher to gain security from knowing where the feedback is heading. You can suggest an agenda and elicit a response, leading towards an agreement on how to proceed. The preparation stage is mainly about achieving a positive climate before the negotiation. The teacher needs to feel as relaxed and comfortable and unthreatened as possible. Secure a place that is private, where you won't be interrupted. It helps to begin by focusing on some third/neutral ground. A handy one is a comment on the learners themselves – start off with something like *"They're a lovely*

*(cheerful/noisy/bright/unruly/etc.) class, aren't they?"* This serves as neutral but phatic communion and leads you onto the next phase.

## **Step 2: Procedure**

While observing classes, it makes sense to take notes about the time spent for each separate activity, the efficiency of techniques and methods used, the climate in the classroom, behavioral patterns and goals achieved. In the process of providing feedback you can use the notes taken, this will help you stay focused and specific. Remember that your feedback is finite – twenty minutes is enough to cover the questions which need to be discussed.

It is crucial to focus on specifics and descriptions. Some helpful fundamentals are:

- Alternatives. Working from the concrete to the hypothetical: this is what you did...this is what resulted...what alternatives exist?...how might they work?
- Cause-effect approach. Discussing the outcomes and linking them with processes. This encourages a reflective approach to teaching. understand that 'things don't just happen' and that they do have control.
- Specificity. Feedback should focus on skills, and not on personalities or behaviors. The one who provides feedback should concentrate on how those skills have been implemented and used and how successfully they have worked out in the classroom.
- Food for thought. Feedback is provided to suggest developing and improving. Eliciting and gently steering the teacher towards the key points is more effective than imposing what had to be done.
- Description and Example. Be descriptive, not evaluative. Focus on the effect the performance had on you, rather than on how good or bad you perceive it to be. For example, saying, "It's wrong to call on students when they don't have their hands up," is a generalization that may or may not be true in all cases. However, saying "When I was a student, I felt uncomfortable when the teacher called on me when I didn't have my hand up," can help the person realize that students may have the same reaction

## **Step 3: Closure**

At this stage the one who receives feedback should get a sense of progress and purpose. Armed with a view "from the outside" he knows which direction to go. This can be expressed in terms of objectives: "I'm going to work on organizing my board in a more focused way", "I'm going to write my instructions before the lesson and see if that makes them clearer", etc. The final line of feedback is reflection. It requires thinking about the experience and whether it was successful in terms of class performance, its priorities and objectives. Bear in mind that feedback serves for students. Thus every suggestion on how to improve class work should go to students' perspectives: "Students will probably like it more if you try...", "The learners will easily get the point if you suggest them...", "It will appeal to students if you..."

## The Guidelines for Giving Feedback

- Capture your lesson

Whether you're being observed or observing someone else, request to use video. Why? It will give you both an objective tool to sit down in front of and discuss together. The video turns feedback into a two-way discussion rather than a feedback session. Rather than imposing your thoughts you can actively discuss, pause, rewind fast forward and allow your colleague to come to his or her own conclusions making it more meaningful for both of you.

- Use exploratory questioning

It naturally opens up dialogue, giving you time to think and draw conclusions. "What do you think you could do to tackle the problem of..." rather than "What you need to do is..."!

- Relate back to previous objectives set

Don't go barking up a different tree! Relate your discussion to the targets already set, if new topics arise; set these as development targets for your next session. Staying focused will allow you to give some 'easy wins', developing a feeling of immediate progress. Be clear in your own mind about why you are giving feedback. What exactly do you want your colleague to achieve with what you are telling them?

- Be patient

Give you and your colleague time to draw your own conclusions and then explore them together without cutting across one another. You will develop a stronger, more professional relationship.

- Do it again

Whether giving or receiving feedback, request you do it again and regularly. Only by continually discussing and breaking down what you saw can you understand progression and be able to embed what you have learnt.

- Be accurate with the language

The vocabulary, wording and tone you use when voicing your ideas and impressions can make a person receiving feedback feel at ease. Some feedback softeners are as follows:

- Maybe you could...
- Have you considered...?
- Have you tried...
- Would it be better if...
- I would suggest...
- Do you think you could try to...
- What about trying...
- I wonder if...
- Another possible solution could be...
- Perhaps you could...
- Could you...
- Could you try to...

- One thing that I have found that helps is to...
- Something that I have tried in the similar situation was...

## **The Challenges of Receiving Feedback**

“Who does he think he is telling me...” “Where does she come off saying...”

Our human instinct for self-preservation can be our worst enemy when we are on the receiving end of constructive feedback. We become defensive and prevent ourselves from truly listening to the observations about our teaching. Rather than benefiting from the feedback as an opportunity for self-improvement, many of us counter the comments with self-justifications. We then lose out on a valuable chance to continue growing as well as improving our teaching techniques.

In giving feedback one teaching professional communicates to another teaching professional specific observations noted during class time. The feedback is based solely on objective analysis, not on feeling or moods. The purpose is simply to offer some insights into ways the teacher can improve his or her interactions with students. When we approach receiving feedback with that frame of mind- as a tool or mirror to help us become always better- we can let down the defensive barriers and listen with a mind looking to improve.

There are certain mechanisms that will help us keep our protective feelings at bay. One way to distract the defensive feelings is to listen reflectively and paraphrase what you hear. “I understand that you noticed my back was to the students for a long time while I was writing on the board.” By repeating what you heard, you eliminate misunderstanding and verbalize the actions observed in the classroom. Another way that helps us focus on listening rather than defending ourselves is to take written notes about the comments and observations. Writing can help us to maintain a professional demeanor and not allow our emotions to take over, by crying or becoming angry. Taking two or three deep breaths before you respond can help get past your immediate emotions.

It is important to use this opportunity to be proactive. During the feedback, together with your observer, begin to formulate a plan on how to implement some improvements in teaching techniques. By brainstorming together to pinpoint some changes you can make you retain some control over the feedback process. “Would you suggest that I write the text on the board before class, and leave it covered?” You show that you heard the observations, recognized the issue, and have already thought through a possible solution. Thank your colleague for their observations and insight; it takes courage to give honest constructive feedback.

Receiving feedback is an opportunity that presents itself throughout our lives and offers us chances to continuously improve ourselves. By keeping the positive aspects of constructive feedback at the forefront of our minds and practicing both reflective listening and proactive planning, we can receive feedback as a gift, not as personal criticism.

## Do's and Don'ts of Giving Feedback

<b>DO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ask for self-assessment</li><li>• comment based on observations</li><li>• start with positives</li><li>• balance feedback</li><li>• mention specific observations</li><li>• suggest what might be improved</li><li>• address the performance, not the person</li><li>• look at the outcome to be achieved</li><li>• be honest</li><li>• summarize what was learned</li></ul>	<b>DON'T</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• criticize without recommending alternatives</li><li>• make generalized comments</li><li>• be dishonestly kind</li></ul>
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## Do's and Don'ts of Receiving Feedback

<b>DO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See it as an opportunity to improve</li><li>• Listen calmly</li><li>• Focus on the content</li><li>• Act professionally</li><li>• Clarify feedback</li><li>• Take notes</li><li>• Ask for suggestions</li><li>• Define a plan</li><li>• Thank you colleague</li></ul>	<b>DON'T</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blame the messenger</li><li>• Jump to defend or justify yourself</li><li>• Give into your emotions</li></ul>
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## Self-Assessment

Honest self-assessment is a vital aspect of our ongoing development as teachers. Through self-evaluation, not only do teachers continuously improve the educational experience of their students, but they also improve and update class topics and materials. Self-monitoring is something we do all the time-consciously and unconsciously. We are aware of our students' interest level, whether or not the activities are engaging them, whether "teacher talk" is outweighing student input. Through this ongoing self-evaluation, a teacher can adjust the pace or activities in the moment, for better interaction with students. In addition to our continuous monitoring, however, it is valuable to regularly review one's classroom experience in a systematic way through a simple checklist or grid.

Self-assessment should begin before class by evaluating your lesson plan. Are my goals and objectives clear? Have I allowed enough time for activities, explanations, practice, and questions? After the class, did I meet my goals? Did I explain tasks clearly? Did I allow an opportunity for student discussion and questions? What could I have done better or differently? In addition to the organization and management of the

class, it is also important to consider one's use of technology, resources, and visual aids. Following an honest evaluation of one's own teaching, thought should be given to possible changes or improvements in future classes.

These regular self-evaluations are, by their nature, subjective. One way in which we can occasionally have a more objective record of our teaching is through bi-annual video or audio recordings of our classroom. While this technique doesn't show every aspect of our teaching, it can reveal habits or behaviors of which we are not aware.

Ongoing self-evaluation is the way by which every teacher, from most experienced to first-time teacher, will continuously learn and improve. As our students' interests change and evolve over time, so, too, must our techniques and course materials. The best way to keep a finger on the pulse of our classroom is through the regular self-assessment of our teaching.

## Conclusion

Since teaching is, in part, a skill, it can be developed like other skills by practicing and getting the opinions of others on how well you have performed. Team teaching and class observation are good opportunities to teach in front of colleagues and friends and hear constructive feedback. The feedback you receive will tell you what you are doing that is effective, as well as what you can do to strengthen your performance.

The way in which feedback is given and received contributes to the learning process. Feedback that is vague, judgmental, ill timed, or unusable is not as valuable as feedback that is specific, descriptive, timely, and practical. Similarly, although being criticized is often not pleasant, being open to well-intentioned, well-crafted feedback can only further your professional development.



# Team Teaching Planning & Observation Rubric

(Adapted from Peace Corps Armenia Team Teaching Manual)

PCV Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Counterpart name and signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Review and fill out the Rubric in collaboration with your counterpart, for each progress report during your service.**

<b>5 <i>Excellent</i></b>	<b>4 <i>Good</i></b>	<b>3 <i>Adequate</i></b>	<b>2 <i>Needs Improvement</i></b>	<b>1 <i>Poor</i></b>
<b>One: Lesson Development (How does co-planning take place?)</b>				
<b>✘</b> The Ukrainian teacher and PCV plan all lessons together to ensure that they follow the curriculum and that appropriate teaching methods are used to facilitate students' mastery of the material.	<b>✘</b> The Ukrainian teacher and PCV plan most lessons together.	<b>✘</b> The Ukrainian teacher and PCV occasionally plan lessons together.	<b>✘</b> The Ukrainian teacher plans the majority of lessons alone; PCV occasionally plans a lesson without the Ukrainian teacher's involvement.	<b>✘</b> The Ukrainian teacher plans all lessons without involving PCV.
<b>Please explain why you indicated the above score and provide examples:</b>				

**Two: Lesson Plans (Do the lesson plans contain all the necessary components?)**

<p>✘ The written lesson plan contains all essential elements (learning objectives, planned activities, co-teachers' responsibilities, materials, a continuous assessment technique), is saved in a portfolio, and contains a new activity or technique co-teachers are trying.</p>	<p>✘ The written lesson plan contains all essential elements (learning objectives, planned activities, co-teachers' responsibilities, materials, a continuous assessment technique), plus is saved in a portfolio binder or folder for future use.</p>	<p>✘ The written lesson plan is missing two or more of the following essential elements (learning objectives, planned activities, co-teachers' responsibilities, materials, a continuous assessment technique).</p>	<p>✘ Each teacher has his/her lesson plan which is not integrated.</p>	<p>✘ No lesson plan is written.</p>
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**Please explain why you indicated the above score and provide examples:**



**Three: Student Interaction (To whom do students look for answers or clarification?)**

✘ Students interact with the Ukrainian teacher, PCV, and classmates to meet their individual learning needs. Ukrainian teacher and PCV encourage student-to-student interaction.

✘ Students interact with both the Ukrainian teacher and PCV

✘ Students interact mostly with the Ukrainian teacher, but are gaining confidence in interacting with the PCV

✘ Students interact with only the Ukrainian teacher or PCV

✘ Students show limited interaction with either the Ukrainian teacher or PCV

**Please explain why you indicated the above score and provide examples:**

**Four: Communicative Approach (Does lesson have an authentic communicative context?)**

<p>✘ All lessons create opportunities for authentic student communication (i.e., all lessons include several activities that are task-oriented, needs-based, learner-centered, contextualized/personalized, and emphasize function over form, etc.).</p>	<p>✘ Most lessons create opportunities for authentic student communication (i.e., most lessons include activities that are task-oriented, needs-based, learner-centered, contextualized/personalized, and emphasize function over form, etc.).</p>	<p>✘ Lessons occasionally include communicative activities (e.g., role-plays, problem-solving, prediction tasks, etc.).</p>	<p>✘ Lessons rarely include communicative activities (e.g., role-plays, problem-solving, prediction tasks, etc.) or activities rely on recitation or memorization rather than authentic communication.</p>	<p>✘ Lessons do not demonstrate the principles of the communicative approach to teaching English.</p>
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**Please explain why you indicated the above score and provide examples:**

**Five: Learner-centered Activities (To what extent are students engaged in learner-centered activities?)**

<p>✘ Students are engaged in learner-centered activities, such as partner work, small groups, and self-directed or participatory activities, which accommodate more than one learning style (visual, audio, and tactile/hands on) for at least 1/2 of the class period.</p>	<p>✘ Students are engaged in learner-centered activities, such as partner work, small groups, and self-directed or participatory activities for at least half of the class period</p>	<p>✘ Students are engaged in learner-centered activities, such as partner work, small groups, and self-directed or participatory activities for at least between 10-15 minutes of the class period</p>	<p>✘ Students are engaged in learner-centered activities, such as partner work, small groups, and self-directed or participatory activities for at least 5 minutes of the class period.</p>	<p>✘ Instruction is “teacher-centered”, i.e., teachers provide information to students and students passively listen or write. Only motivated students are engaged in the lesson.</p>
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**Please explain why you indicated the above score and provide examples:**

**Six: Classroom Management (How is discipline maintained and positive learning environment created?)**

<p>✘ Students demonstrate understanding of classroom rules, and possible consequences of their behavior. Both the Ukrainian teacher and PCV support each other in enforcing the rules and have developed more effective disciplinary tools.</p>	<p>✘ Students demonstrate understanding of classroom rules, and both the Ukrainian teacher and PCV support each other in enforcing the rules.</p>	<p>✘ Co-teachers have developed tentative rules and discussed various techniques for maintaining a positive learning environment.</p>	<p>✘ The Ukrainian teacher or PCV <i>alone</i> determines and enforces rules in the classroom. The co-teachers are unclear of what techniques to use.</p>	<p>✘ There is no clear set of rules and neither the Ukrainian teacher nor PCV assumes responsibility for managing the classroom.</p>
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**Please explain why you indicated the above score and provide examples:**

**Seven: Classroom Setting (How effectively does the classroom atmosphere stimulate students' interest in learning?)**

<p>✘ The classroom contains a wide variety of appropriate, interesting, well-cared for instructional materials (e.g., teacher- and student-produced posters, pictures, games, manipulatives, etc.) to stimulate students' interest in learning.</p>	<p>✘ The classroom contains appropriate, interesting, well-cared for instructional materials (e.g., posters, pictures, games, manipulatives, etc.) to stimulate students' interest in learning.</p>	<p>✘ The classroom contains some instructional materials to stimulate students' interest in learning, although they are not appropriate to student needs or are in poor condition.</p>	<p>✘ The classroom contains very few educational materials to stimulate students' interest in learning.</p>	<p>✘ The classroom contains no educational materials.</p>
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**Please explain why you indicated the above score and provide examples:**

**Eight: Assessment (In what way do co-teachers use continuous assessment tasks to determine that learning objectives are met?)**

<p>✘ After using continuous assessment tasks to determine if learning objectives were achieved, co-teachers adjust lessons so students achieve the remaining objectives.</p>	<p>✘ During the lesson co-teachers observe individual students' work or ask them questions to determine if the student is achieving the learning objectives.</p>	<p>✘ At the end of the lesson co-teachers ask the whole class questions to determine whether learning objectives were met.</p>	<p>✘ Assessment tasks are unrelated to lesson objectives.</p>	<p>✘ No assessment tasks were observed.</p>
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**Please explain why you indicated the above score and provide examples:**

## The Ukrainian School Year: Holidays, Events and Other Activities

Being “in the know” on holidays and events during the school year can greatly help to reduce any surprises in your teaching endeavors.

### A Variety of School Holidays and Events

A Ukrainian school year is full of different holidays, events, and other activities that may or may not affect the way a PCV will normally conduct their work at school. These are often fun and exciting events where the PCV will be able to build rapport with the staff and students, as well as creating unforgettable memories of their Peace Corps experience. Teacher’s Day, New Year’s, and Women’s Day are a few of the holidays where schools often put a lot of effort into a week-long or day-long event filled with concerts, ceremonies, and parties with food and drink. Holidays and events of lesser importance, which include Men’s Day and Army Day may be celebrated on a smaller scale where individuals can receive gifts and other expressions of appreciation. There are a variety of vacation periods within the months of October, January, and March when PCVs, students, and teachers alike will have a week or more off from school. These are periods where PCVs may conduct extra-curricular work, travel, or rest. English week may be particular important for PCVs depending on how involved their respective schools plan for them to be. All in all, Ukrainian holidays, events, and other activities at school will significantly enrich the experience of the PCV in various ways.

### Holidays & Events – the Details

<u>Event / Holiday / Other Activity</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>What to expect</u>
Day of Knowledge (First Bell)	September 1 <sup>st</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A ceremony is usually held outside, with the 11<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> forms as the main participants.</li> <li>- The ceremony ends with an 11<sup>th</sup> form boy carrying a 1<sup>st</sup> form girl around the group, ringing a bell. The 11<sup>th</sup> form then leads the 1<sup>st</sup> form inside the school.</li> </ul>
Teacher's Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday of October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is usually celebrated at school on the Friday beforehand, maybe with a concert.</li> <li>- Lots of flowers, candies and cards will be given to teachers. Teachers may celebrate at school or later at a café.</li> <li>- Depending on the school, the 11<sup>th</sup> form pupils may teach classes on the Thursday or Friday before.</li> <li>- Consider saving money on over-priced flowers and give your teachers and director homemade cookies or other bakery treats.</li> </ul>
Autumn / Fall Break	Last Week of October / 9 <sup>th</sup> week of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers may still be required to work.</li> <li>- Depending on their work load, they may have their holiday once they have been at school for</li> </ul>

	the semester (2013 was 10/28-11/1)	15 hours over Autumn Break.
Day of Defense of the Homeland	December 6 <sup>th</sup>	-Girls and women congratulate boys and men, and give them small gifts.
End of First Semester / Winter Break	December 30 <sup>th</sup> – January 11 <sup>th</sup> (varies each year)	- Pupils will be preparing for New Year's Parties (and may not attend lessons while they prepare)
<b>New Year's Eve / New Year's</b>	December 31 <sup>st</sup> / January 1 <sup>st</sup>	- This holiday most closely resembles the Christmas in the U.S., with trees, presents and decorations. - Celebrations may spill over onto the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Orthodox Christmas</b>	January 7 <sup>th</sup>	- A more religious holiday than perhaps in the US, Christmas is usually spent with family. - "Holy Supper" begins with the first stars in the sky on Christmas Eve (January 6 <sup>th</sup> ). 12 dishes are served, representing the 12 Apostles.
Second Semester Begins	January 11 <sup>th</sup> or January 12 <sup>th</sup> (varies each year)	
Old New Year's Eve / Old New Year's	January 13 <sup>th</sup> / January 14 <sup>th</sup>	- Still celebrated but not a public holiday, Old New Year's is based on the Julian calendar. - Children (usually boys) carol on Old New Year's Eve, and hope for money, food or candy in return for their efforts.
Men's Day	February 23 <sup>rd</sup>	- Formerly known as The Soviet Army Day, this date is now the unofficial day to celebrate men.
English Week	Varies depending on school	- English week is a week-long affair where students and English teachers organize small events, concerts, and competitions in the spirit of English learning. - Classes will prepare presentations, often in the form of posters which celebrate various notable figures from English-speaking countries. - Teachers will also conduct open lessons where anyone interested may observe.
<b>Women's Day</b>	March 8 <sup>th</sup>	- If this day falls during the week, an additional day off is usually given on the day before or after. It may be made up later in the semester. - Lots of flowers, candy and cards will be given. A concert may even be given in your town. - As suggested for Teacher's Day, consider giving homemade treats instead of flowers. Otherwise, expect to pay 2-3 times more than usual.



Spring Break	Last week of March (confirm each year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As with Autumn Break, teachers may have to work this week based on their normal workload.</li> </ul>
<b>Orthodox Easter</b>	April 20 <sup>th</sup> (in 2014) (observed April 21 <sup>st</sup> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Monday after Easter is given as the observed day / public day off.</li> <li>- Families usually arise before the sun to attend church and have their Easter Baskets blessed. Afterwards, families have breakfast together, then take naps and eat throughout the day.</li> </ul>
<b>International Workers Solidarity Days</b>	May 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These two days are the first of several public and school celebrations in the month of May.</li> <li>- When these fall during the week, an extra day off is usually given to make it three days off. That extra day will probably be made up later.</li> </ul>
<b>Victory Day</b>	May 9 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As with the Labor Days above, an extra day may be given to make this a two-day holiday, with the extra day usually being made up.</li> </ul>
Last Bell	May 30 <sup>th</sup> (varies each year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Similar to First Bell, a ceremony is usually held outside, with the 11<sup>th</sup> form and 1<sup>st</sup> form pupils as the main participants.</li> <li>- Flowers are usually presented to teachers during the ceremony, so be prepared.</li> <li>- The ceremony ends with an 11<sup>th</sup> form girl and a 1<sup>st</sup> form boy ringing the bell for the group.</li> </ul>
Graduation of the 11 <sup>th</sup> Form	End of May (varies each year – depends on final examination dates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After the 11<sup>th</sup> form students take all of their exams (before Last Bell), their graduation is a huge celebration and closely resembles a US prom.</li> <li>- Each pupil dresses <i>way up</i> (suits for boys; prom dresses, hair and makeup for girls) and celebrates with teachers and families.</li> <li>- After the ceremony, the class goes to a café, and stays out as a group until the sun comes up.</li> </ul>
“Practice Lessons”	~ 3 weeks after Last Bell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers must work during the month of June, usually in the form of “practice lessons” that pupils must also attend, unless they are traveling or at a camp.</li> <li>- Teachers may instead work at a camp to meet this obligation, but may not be paid extra.</li> <li>- The 9<sup>th</sup> form pupils do not attend, as they are preparing for, and then taking, exams.</li> </ul>
Summer	July & August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers finally have their holidays in July and August, and have a short break from school.</li> <li>- Depending on your school, they may go back around August 15<sup>th</sup> to prepare for the new school year.</li> </ul>

**+ Events in bold are official public holidays.**

\* When an official Ukrainian public holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the following Monday is *usually* given, but you **always** need to confirm with your school before you assume.

\*\* When an extra day off is given (i.e. before or after Women's Day, May Holidays, Victory Day, etc.), it may be made up during Saturday school, or with an extra lesson each day during the following week. This always depends on your oblast and school, so **always** confirm before you assume your school will handle the holidays in the same manner as another PCV's school.

\*\*\* *Weather Days*: in the winter, if the temperature is expected to be -20° C when school begins, secondary school lessons may be delayed, shortened or even cancelled. Make sure your counterpart knows to contact you ASAP if lessons are shortened (and how short they will be!), so that you can adjust accordingly. Primary school pupils may have changes to their schedule at even -17° C – it depends on the school and region. Expect much fewer students in attendance.

### **Expectations from / of the Peace Corps Volunteer**

- *What behavior or actions may be expected of the PCV*
- *How the PCV may be treated during special events, holidays, and/or activities*

Depending on their schools, PCVs may encounter a slew of expectations during the celebration of Ukrainian holidays, events, and activities. PCVs will be expected to dress especially well for concerts and other events where the whole school and perhaps parents gather. This is where the tip in the packing guide will have come in handy in terms of being sure to pack at least one particularly nice dress or suit. PCVs will be expected to conduct themselves professionally as always, by being punctual, attentive, and participatory. They may also be asked to be directly involved in the planning and conducting of particular events during English week and other events where they may: participate as judges for competitions; aid in the conception of displays and posters; plan and carry out activities and performances; and be overall supportive of a situation or activity. These situations are a unique way for the PCV to be visibly involved with their school to a wide audience and build rapport with faculty members they may otherwise not interact with on a daily basis.

As a volunteer, a teacher and an American, a PCV may be treated in a special way during holidays, special events, and activities. This may include taking a place of honor at a table where food and drinks are being served. They will most likely be the recipients of toasts, expressions or speeches of appreciation, gifts, and flowers. Oftentimes, a PCV will also be expected to partake in the tradition of giving and receiving toasts. Those who do not normally consume alcohol may want to participate by drinking one sip to show camaraderie, but it is always acceptable to politely refuse. These are special moments where the PCV may truly feel the recognition, gratitude, and acknowledgement from their school overall. These are moments to look forward to!

## What Can You Do to Enrich Your Ukrainian Holiday Experience?

- *Advice on how a PCV may enrich their own experience of unique Ukrainian holidays/events/activities*
- Accept any invitations to celebrate some of these holidays with your Ukrainian friends! You will be able to get first-hand experience on Ukrainian traditions, and in turn share your stories with other PCVs, as well as friends and family in the US.
- Ask your pupils and teachers to tell you about the holidays from their perspective, and about their favorite aspects and traditions for each celebration.
- If your school or town is hosting a concert or celebration for major or minor holidays, go to it! Both your teachers and pupils will be really glad to see you there.
- Learn a few toasts or congratulatory remarks in Ukrainian or Russian, so that you can wish “Happy {pick your holiday}” to other teachers, pupils and friends in their native language.

In the beginning of the school year, prepare yourself for things at school to be a little bit chaotic. Some schools may still be waiting to see if they have enough 1<sup>st</sup> formers to split the classes, or to even have a 1<sup>st</sup> form, as well as whether any new students will join the other forms. Once class sizes are finalized, the scheduling *заєуч* (Vice Principal) can finish the master class schedule and have the director approve it. Until that point, a tentative schedule will be put up during the first week of school, but expect there to be a lot of changes made until the director’s approval.

During the first week of school, pupils are receiving books from their class masters and preparing copybooks in each subject, while teachers are completing lots of paperwork and starting a new *журнал* (grade book) for each form. The first few lessons of the school year will likely be filled with a review of grammar and discussion of students’ summer holiday activities. Productive new lessons may not begin until the next week of school – and that is okay!

Throughout the school year, Ukrainian teachers will be incredibly busy grading copybooks and updating the *журнал* for daily attendance, marks and lesson plan topics, as well as month-end copybook grades and unit tests.

At the end of the each semester, all secondary school pupils will have English tests for each receptive skill (listening and reading) and productive skill (writing and speaking). These will usually take between 2-3 lessons total to complete for each class, so the last week or two of each semester may be filled with more testing than actual lessons.

## Other Activities / Things to Be Aware Of

There are other ongoing activities happening at your school that you may or may not be aware of, and/or may or may not be expected to attend / participate in. Do your best to ask your counterpart about something you’ve heard other teachers or pupils mention, not only to better understand what is happening at your school, but also to see whether you need to be in attendance. Sometimes these are called *лінійка* (line-up or gathering for the children). There are lots of interesting things going on each

week, but they may be so normal for your counterpart that he or she forgets to explain what's happening – so just ask!

Teacher meetings may happen weekly or monthly at your school. They may be scheduled ahead of time, or a last-minute announcement that requires you to race to the meeting room in between classes. It helps to be at the first few meetings of the semester, so that you can meet some of the non-English teachers and show them and the director that you are invested in the school. However, most of the meetings are conducted in Ukrainian or Russian, and you probably do not need to attend all of them. Decide with your counterpart what you should do for the majority of the semester.

Teachers who do not have their own classroom, or whose classroom may be used for other lessons when it is empty, will usually hang out in the teachers' room. Usually, this room has tables or desks, places for teachers to store their copybooks, and the shelf containing each form's *журнал*. It is a great place to get to know the other teachers in your school, practice your Ukrainian or Russian, and prepare materials for your next lessons.

Finally, other various activities for pupils will occur throughout the year – academic and sports competitions, plays, minor holidays and celebrations, etc. Pupils will probably invite you to attend, and be so excited when they actually see you there. These are great opportunities to become more invested in your school and its pupils!

## Brief History of Education in Ukraine

### **I. Folk pedagogy as a precursor of school and modern pedagogical science**

- The first principles of Ukrainian pedagogics are traced from the time of the primitive family group.
- The most skillful members of the family group and the priests became the primary tutors and teachers. Elderly people helped teenagers (boys and girls separately) to master housekeeping skills, as well as acquainted them with family beliefs and customs. Upbringing was completed with ritual initiations, trials of maturity and readiness to fulfill adults' housekeeping duties.
- Children's folklore is a valuable acquisition of that epoch and is used by today's teachers.

### **II. School, education and the dawn of pedagogical science in Kievan Rus' (IX- XIII centuries)**

- The first school "The Prince's Teaching School" was founded by Prince Volodymyr the Great in Kyivan Rus' in the year of Rus's Baptism (988).
- There were some schools attached to churches where children gained the skills to read, write, count and sing with focus on religion. There was also a kind of home tutoring for young princes.
- The main means of learning were manuscript books.
- At the peak of Kyivan Rus prosperity, in the XII century a crucial pedagogical idea appeared. It was "*Volodymyr Monomakh's teaching for his children*" in which the old prince taught pupils rules of high personal and public spirit.

### **III. The epoch (XVI-XVII) of the Ukrainian national revival (Brothers' schools, Kievo-Mogylyanska academy, G.Scovoroda 1722-1794, K.Ushynskiy 1824-1870)**

- A unique phenomenon in the history of Ukrainian education at this time was the functioning of the *Brother's Schools* (80-ies of the XVI cen). They were organized and run by the church brothers (social-political organizations of orthodox community).
- Curriculum included democracy and introduction of class-lesson system, tight connections between students' parents and school, and thorough study that matched schools in Western Europe. Ivan Fedorov founded the first printing house in 1573 in Lviv, which promoted extension of knowledge and opening new schools.
- Ostroz'ka academy (1576) and Kyivo-Mogylyans'ka academy (1632) became the first national higher educational establishments—this school had been the only of its kind in Ukraine, Eastern Europe and the whole Orthodox world. In 1992 the academy was renewed as National University "Kyivo-Mogylyans'ka Academy".
- Some bright educational representatives of the time period deserve to be recognized. *Grygoriy Skovoroda (1722-1794)*, *Kostyantyn Ushyns'kyi*

(1824-1871) are among them. Their philosophical and pedagogical views influenced the formation of educative priorities of modern pedagogics. They were convinced that every nation had its own educative system which is based on the customs and traditions of the nation, mother tongue, religious beliefs.

**IV. *Sophiya Rusova (1871-1940) and Grygoriy Vashchenko (1878-1967) about national upbringing of youth***

- *Grygoriy Vashchenko's* (1878-1967) proved Ukrainians had their own national educational ideal, and they were changing historically.
- Ideas of national upbringing formed the basis of *Sophia Rusova's* (1856-1940) pedagogic system. She developed a concept of the formation of the national kindergarten in Ukraine.

**V. *A.S.Makarenko's (1888-1939) and V.O.Sukhomlyns'kyl's (1918-1970)***

- In 1988 UNESCO named four teachers whose contributions were important to pedagogical views, and among them was *Anton Makarenko* (1888-1939). His experience in re-education of young criminals and offenders after the civil war was a unique experiment in world practice. The result of his work became a united community in which every person received education including professional and high moral qualities.
- *Vasyl Sukhomlynskyi's* (1918-1970) humane pedagogics became a counterbalance to the authoritarianism of the Soviet school. All classes in his "School under the blue sky" were held in the open air. Students learned to listen to the music of nature, understand it, and depict their impressions, pictures and tales. Sukhomlynskyi paid special attention to the problems of moral education. He is considered to be one of the biggest moralists of today's Ukrainian pedagogics.

**VI. *Today's school and cooperative pedagogical ideas.***

- Democratic changes, which took place at the end of the XX century, have reflected the pedagogics of cooperation we see today.
- Studying should be based on democratic principles, and teachers and students should become partners in the common educational process. These ideas are supported by the progressive teachers.
- Today's priorities of the Ukrainian pedagogics may be formulated this way: to form vigorous optimistic people who are ready for self-development, self-implementation, and public activity.

## ***The Modern Classroom in Ukraine: What does it look like?***

### -Curriculum-

The Ministry of Education and Science works out curricula according to the State standard of primary education and the State standard of basic and complete secondary education. They are renewed every 10 years. Curricula are common and compulsory for all schools. English is taught from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The basic curriculum consists of 2 parts invariable and variable. The invariable part contains 7 educational branches: language and literature, social science, math, nature study, art, technology, health and physical education. For instance, "Language and Literature" includes such subjects as Ukrainian language and literature, languages of national minorities and literature, foreign languages and world literature.

### -The structure of school-

The main types of secondary educational establishments are secondary schools of general education of 3 levels: primary school (1-4gr.), basic (5-9) and senior school (10-11). Students who get general secondary education can enter higher educational establishments.

### -Methods and forms of education-

The main point of educational process in the Ukrainian school in the XXI century is learner-centered education. It means a teacher sees the personality in every student with his\her unique character, temperament, capabilities, tastes and interests. He\she adjusts methodology to the learning peculiarities of a student, and stimulates students' development.

Teachers use different strategies in the development of problem-solving. The students are interested in making projects. They try to show their own perception of the problem they are learning and its solution. Interactive methods of studying and group work are widely spread now. Groups are formed due to different interests or learning abilities. Conducting atypical lessons such as lesson-trip, lesson-tale, lesson-concert, lesson-scientific conference, lesson-CMW (Club of Merry and Whitty) are practiced in Ukraine.

### -Resources-

The main means of learning are different textbooks and manuals recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science. Some schools have a computer lab, but not all schools have Internet, especially in the country. Some town and city schools also have smart-boards, projectors, and sound equipment.

### -Discipline-

Educative process is directed to the upbringing of reasoned discipline cultural behavior. Teachers try to raise the feeling of responsibility for doing students' homework, and to improve their motivation and interest for process and results of studying. The results of students' activity are marked with a 12-point system. There

are no other affects on student's behavior. The student may get a note orally for his bad behavior, or at the end of the week, the mark may be lowered.

-Peculiarities of interaction of participants of educational process-

Teachers, practical psychologists, students, and their parents take part in the educational process. The teachers are expected to demonstrate their high professional and personal features, judiciousness, selflessness, creativity, sincerity and frankness. Modern Ukrainian children would like to see a teacher as a person who understands them, is interested in their likes and dislikes, and plans to be ready to help implement them.

Great attention is paid to unity of students staff based on discipline, active bodies of self-government, relations of business dependence (students should obey bodies of the class). Important means of unity are different activities, class and school traditions. Out of class activities play a significant place in school, especially for religious holidays (and especially with regards to Western Ukraine)





## Brief History of Education in the United States:

- **Colonial Era (1600-1700)**
  - Only available for upper class white children, poor or ethnic children would sometimes receive education at home but often received little or no education.
  - Taught only by older male men, in private schools, strict discipline.
  - Subjects included reading, writing, simple math, etiquette, household skills and a heavy emphasis on religion.
  - Lessons were in one-room schoolhouses, 15-30 multi-age students with few supplies, educational methods were based largely on memorization and vocal repetition.
  - Results of this era on modern education:
    - 1) We take this period of education as the starting point that modern education has moved away from. We can see extreme opposites in modern times compared to educational practices. For example now all lower level education in American is public, free (excluding secondary and higher education) and caters to every individual regardless of class, race or religion. Another example would be that the teacher profession is one held by men and women alike.
- **Early National Education (1700-1800)**
  - Initially not very different from Colonial Education
  - English Grammar schools were established in the 1700s, providing more focus on business or career oriented classes instead of religion. For example students would study foreign languages, navigation, bookkeeping, or other trade based studies.
  - Etiquette based skills such as dancing, dining, and manners still occupied a prominent space in education.
  - This era saw more Universities established from a mere handful in the 1600s, as well as an attendance increase—only males were allowed to go to University.
  - The 1700s saw individuals and institutions begin to cater education to underprivileged groups such as Women, African Americans and Native Americans.
  - Especially with Native Americans, school was designed to “de-Indianize” the students and assimilate them into white, European culture and society. This was quite often done by cruel and inhuman measures.
  - Results of this era on modern education:
    - 1) In this period we can first see the diversification of curriculum and the first time period where students were able to have some choice in what they studied. This has continued to grow into education today, where students in any given high school have required classes of course, but then have a large range of optional or elective classes to choose from.
    - 2) We can also see a lot of progress from this time period in that males and females attend universities, and practically all schools offer a multi-diversity rich curriculum; featuring history

from multiple perspectives and educational material from all ethnicities.

- **19<sup>th</sup> Century Education (1800-1900)**
  - This time period was referred to as “The Common School Period” because school went from being completely private to being available to the common masses. Even with this mentality, especially in the South, most schools were segregated by race.
  - Education became funded by public taxes, influenced by public vote, state and district based as well as becoming compulsory at this point in time.
  - Some arguments for common schooling were “Americanizing” foreigners, diluting culture, and the idea that the more educated the mass populous was the more productive they would be in society.
  - For the first time public high schools were developed, another step in moving away from the privatization of education.
  - By 1861, there were 182 colleges founded that survive to the present day (more than 600 others were founded over the years before the Civil War but did not survive). 133 of the survivors were founded in the 30 years before the Civil War due to westward expansion.
  - Not until the 1870s could women attend Universities—even with attendance it wasn’t until the 1920s that they could receive a degree. Higher education still remained largely a privilege for wealthy men.
  - Results of this Era on modern Education:
    - 1) In modern day we can see the continued development of high schools, with roughly 35-40,000 high schools in the Nation.
    - 2) We can also see the continued expansion of Universities from this era, with well over 6,500 accredited Universities in America today.
  
- **20<sup>th</sup> Century Education (1900-2000)**
  - Attendance was mandatory, and education was universal. This century gave rise to the idea that every child was entitled to a state controlled, public, free education.
  - Despite this positive idealism the deeply embedded ties of racism unwillingly died away amongst great suffering, protesting and legalities. It wasn’t until 1954 that public schools in America became de-segregated.
  - America saw a great rise in Pre-school/Kindergarten development, as well as a boom in both the number of Universities in America, and their attendance.
  - By the 1920s, the invention of the automobile let states consolidate schools into larger districts.
  - From 1900 to 1996 the percentage of teenagers who graduated from high school increased from about 6 percent to about 85 percent.
  - In 1975 Congress passed PL 94-142 requiring a free appropriate education for all handicapped children.
  - A federal report published in 1983 indicated very low academic achievement in public schools. As a result, most states have implemented reform strategies that emphasize more frequent testing

conducted by states, more effective state testing, and more state-mandated curriculum requirements.

- **The Modern Classroom: What does it look like?**

-Teacher expectations-

- a) That students arrive to class on time, with homework done, and with materials needed for the class (e.g. pencil, notebook textbooks).
- b) That all students participate in class activities.
- c) That students will behave in a manner that is respectful to themselves, others and the teacher.

-Student expectations-

- a) That the teacher is on time, prepared and knowledgeable in regards to the topic and activities.
- b) That class material is interesting and relevant to their work and lives.
- c) That assignments, grades and tests are fair and reflect the material covered in class.

-Curriculum-

In the last thirty or so years, schools followed a basic national curriculum set by the federal government. Within this national curriculum states and even districts (rayons) could then decide and tailor their curriculum to fit the needs, abilities and interests of their regions and students. In the last few years, there has been a large reform attempting to bring all public schools under the same curriculum on a national scale. In a basic sense, students in middle and secondary schools see the same basic required curriculum. Math, Science, History, English, Geography, Physical Education and Foreign Language. From the basics then students have the choice of many electives, or optional classes. They can continue studies in a specific area such as science, or take a wide range of other classes such as art, music, architecture, mechanics etc.

-Methods-

Methods seen in the modern classroom can differ greatly, however, one thing in common with American schools is the Communicative method, or the approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study. Methods are largely student-centered, putting a good deal of responsibility on students, and focusing on teaching methods that are very interactive.

-Resources-

Basically any given classroom in America has access to computers, whether they are there in the classroom, a computer lab in the school, laptops, iPads or even some cases of students getting an individual

laptop signed out to them for the school year. Many schools have smart-boards (interactive touch screen white boards), and basically all have projectors and sound capabilities. As time goes on, more and more schools have wireless Internet for students and teachers alike. The complete accessibility to technology plays a large part in teaching, curriculum and homework.

#### -Discipline-

Discipline differs from school to school, but an example of your average system is as follows: Many schools operate on a point system where, for example, if you are late to class once that is one point. Or if you intentionally miss a class, that is three points. Say a student accumulates ten points, then they have to stay after school and serve an hour detention—which can be extra school work, or a punishment in itself that they cannot go home. It grows from there, if a student is in a fight, perhaps they may be suspended from school for a day or two, and if there are serious infractions, then they might be removed for a whole semester. An important thing to note is that individual problems are handled just as that. If a student is talking back to a teacher, often the teacher will step out into the hall with that student, or talk to them after class alone. It is very uncommon or even not proper to embarrass or put down a student in front of their peers.

#### -Extra-Curricular Activities-

Starting as early as elementary school and continuing through College/University it is more or less an accepted principle that all schools offer extra-curricular activities. These activities take form in the shape of many, many different things such as sports, clubs and other types of organizations. Almost all the time teachers at the school are the coaches and leaders of these sports and clubs. Participation in extra-curricular activities is rarely required, but is often encouraged by parents and teachers alike. It is more common than not that an average student is involved in one or more extra-curricular activities.

Below is a list of what an average high school in America would offer. It is important to note that schools may offer much more or less than what is seen here, depending on many factors such as size, location and funding.

- Sports: (Men's) football, tennis, cross-country running, golf, basketball, swimming, wrestling, baseball, track/field and soccer. (Women's) cross-country running, tennis, golf, basketball, volleyball, swimming, softball, track/field, soccer, and cheerleading.

- Clubs: (Note: many of these clubs are offered as regular classes in the curriculum) business, debate, foreign languages, chess,

theatre, school band, art, reading, agriculture, weightlifting, writing, photography, volunteering, outdoors, choir, shop/building, politics, gardening, ect.



## General Best Practices for Teaching English

*Adapted from “Do You Speak English,” Edited by Susan Iannuzzi*

### Changes in the language classroom:

The role of the teacher in English language classrooms has changed over the past sixty years. This was partly due to changing objectives in foreign language teaching as a result of the increased need for real communication skills in second languages. It has also been the result of increased knowledge coming from the field of psychology about how language learning takes place. Thus, the teacher’s role has changed from that of a *lecturer* to that of a *facilitator*, whose job is to provide opportunities for students to use and function in English.

The ideal language classroom is now a more **student-centered classroom**. This change is supported by psychological research that has made clear some of the conditions that help and support students’ learning. The goal of the teacher with communicative objectives may be thought of as creating an interesting, active, student-centered classroom with activities based on meaningful use of language.

### The purpose of presentation:

The term *presentation* describes what we as teachers do to introduce new material. New material may be grammar, vocabulary, or even the introduction of a text or a task. It is any concept or new material that will be put to use. Presentation is usually followed by some kind of practice of the new material to consolidate it, with the goal of developing mastery.

Traditionally, the teacher’s role in presentation was seen as the expert, or the *giver of information*. This was compatible with the notion of the teacher as *lecturer*. The student’s role was as that of *receiver of the information*, or the listener of the lecture. However the information that the teacher presents is not always heard or understood. Unless the student actually pays attention, perceives and remembers the information, the student will not be on the way to mastery, but will likely forget the information.

So, what is our role as teachers in the presentation? Of course, teachers are still the ones with the knowledge to present, but we need to think of ways to be effective in getting this information across to our students. To achieve this, we should try to do the following:

- Focus the students’ attention on exactly what we want them to know.
- Make sure they can clearly see or hear the material.
- Make the material relevant to the students’ background knowledge so that they can understand or relate to it.
- Make the new material memorable, which can be done in a variety of ways, which we will see below.

### **Focusing and keeping the students' attention:**

The students have to become focused on the material / teacher to have any possibility of taking in the information. Initially, the students have to be alert, watching and ready for whatever is coming. Their expectations are raised; they have a need to know, and hopefully, a desire as well.

According to studies on the **attention span**, there are peaks and valleys in students' attentiveness. The first 10 to 15 minutes are often a period of strong attention, but after this initial period, attention drops steeply. So, we need to work to keep our students' attention throughout the presentation of new material. In order to do this, we need to involve them in it. One way we can do this is through elicitation.

### **Elicitation techniques:**

**Elicitation** involves questioning and other techniques for getting students to contribute to the learning process. Instead of the teacher giving the information, the students are part of the information-giving stage as well. Consider this example:

#### **Situation 1**

Teacher: (pointing to a map) Look. This is a *map*. (says the word in Ukrainian).  
Now say *map*. Can you say it?

Students: Map.

#### **Situation 2**

Teacher: (pointing to a map) What is this? Anyone?

Students: Map.

Even if the students don't know the answer, elicitation still serves the purpose of getting students' attention. Furthermore, it is likely that in classes with mixed ability, one of the students will know the word or concept being introduced. In this respect elicitation is very useful for **mixed-ability classrooms** since those who know are not bored and can participate.

Effective elicitation includes more than just asking direct questions. It includes the following:

- Enough time to allow students to think.
- Prompts with half-finished sentences, for example: This map is not small. It's ... (waiting for the response *big*).
- Emphasis on the incorrect part of a response by using **question intonation**, for example: He **have** hung the map on the wall? **He have hung?**
- Prompts with **gestures** or facial expressions, for example: He **looks** at the map yesterday. Teacher motions over her shoulder to indicate past time.

### **Helping students to perceive:**

Students need to be able to see and / or hear the presentation clearly. Whether they can see and hear the new material needs to be checked with them before going too far into the presentation. In addition, it is preferable for many students to experience the material through more than one sense and more than once. This increases the likelihood that students will remember the material.

**Facilitating understanding:**

New material, by definition, is something the students may not have encountered before. In order to understand it, new information has to be linked to what students already know about the language (perhaps grammatical forms) and what they already know about life (the meaning). We as teachers provide the link by helping students make the connections to things they already know.

**Helping students remember:**

Students need to be able to remember the material that has been presented until it has been practiced and mastered. However, not all students respond to presented material in the same way. For some learners, what they see is more memorable, but for others, what they hear is more memorable. Some students respond to movement, such as gestures, **miming**, or acting in order to remember something.

The more a presentation causes a personal response for the student, the more memorable it will be. When material is colorful, unusual, or dramatic, it tends to have more of an impact. For instance, supplementing the activities in this book with your own photos, songs, or objects will make the lessons more memorable.

**Best Practices in Reading Instruction****The role of reading:**

Reading has long been a part of the English curriculum. Reading has typically been considered important because it is a way to gain knowledge about the world as well as improve the students' English through exposure to grammatical structures and vocabulary. Traditionally, reading has been thought of as a **passive** skill. Students were given a text and instructed to read silently and on their own. Reading passages were assigned as homework so as not to waste class time on a silent and passive activity. When finished with their reading, students would be asked various comprehension questions to check their understanding of the content of the text. Alternatively, a text would be read aloud by one student or the teacher, after which, the class would be asked to answer questions on it. In both of these situations, the reading process was treated more as a test because students were expected to get specific information from the text.

**Characteristics of reading:**

It isn't difficult to see how this traditional idea of reading developed. There are natural characteristics of reading that distinguish it from other skills. Obviously, in order to read, there must be a written text of some kind. By its very nature, a written text is permanent, so the reader can look at it repeatedly to review a word, a sentence, or even the entire text. Because students can look again at a text, teachers often believe that the students should be able to find the answers simply by looking at the text, again and again if necessary. However, without



skills and strategies for reading, students may not be able to fully understand or interact with the text optimally.

### **Reading as communicative and interactive:**

A more modern approach views reading as an **interactive** process with possibilities for teaching and learning with real communicative value. Obviously, students will have to read alone during the reading lesson, but it is important to include activities which enable students to interact with each, either in pairs, groups, or as a class. Through interaction, students use other skills, such as speaking and listening, as part of the reading lesson.

It is helpful to think of reading as having three stages:

- **Pre-reading stage**
- **During-reading stage**
- **Post-reading stage**

Each stage has an important role. It is tempting to tell students to go ahead and read a text silently, but this is not an adequate way of approaching reading in today's classroom. In the **pre-reading stage**, it is important to draw on the students' own knowledge of the content. In other words, we need to prepare them to read. By doing this, students can anticipate the information in the reading and it is more likely that they will remember it, which is critical to achieving mastery of anything.

In the **during-reading stage**, students should have a purpose for reading. Not all reading is simply reading to understand the whole text, and teachers must be clear to specify why students are reading and what students are expected to take away from the reading. Sometimes students are reading quickly for the main idea. Sometimes, they are reading for specific information. Sometimes, they are reading to determine the author's opinion about something.

Frequently, the **post-reading stage** is seen as simply a time for answer comprehension questions. However, comprehension questions as just one of the activities that are useful at this stage. The post-reading stage is an opportunity to focus on difficult or key vocabulary as well as an opportunity for discussion of the main points, the author's purpose, or even key grammatical structures.

### **Interactive reading techniques:**

There is often an assumption that students who are literate in their first language can read as well in English. Unfortunately, this is not always true. Frequently, students need to be shown how to use their existing reading skills. Similarly, students may need to draw on their existing knowledge of the structure of different kinds of texts, for example, stories, advertisements, etc.

One skill which students may already do in their native language is skimming. **Skimming** refers to quickly running your eye across a whole text to get the

main idea, or gist. This is an important skill because it enables students to guess or predict the main idea or purpose of the text. In essence, skimming gives students an advantage for the more focused reading required in the during-reading stage.

**Scanning** is also a useful skill to use. Scanning involves quickly looking for a particular piece of information in a text, for example, a name, a date, a definition, or key information. Good scanning ability allows students to find specific details without taking the time to read the entire text.

## **Vocabulary Development**

In addition, teachers can encourage students to develop strategies for learning new vocabulary. One effective technique is that of guessing the meaning of vocabulary from **context**. It is tempting to simply ask students to translate English words into Ukrainian to determine if they understand their meanings. However, this technique is less likely to lead to mastery of the vocabulary in English. Students are less likely to remember the words if they have only translated them. More importantly, students are missing the opportunity to make their own associations for the words while they interact with the text. As a result, there are no translation exercises in the supplementary activities. All the vocabulary activities strive to develop students' skills of guessing meaning from context, which in turn will make it more likely that they retain the words and develop the ability to use them meaningfully.

## **Best Practices in Listening Instruction**

### **The role of listening:**

Listening is an important skill in language learning. Many approaches to language learning have highlighted or relied heavily on listening, for example, the Audio-lingual and The Direct approach, just to name two. Some studies have shown that listening accounts for about 45% of our daily communication.

So, it is somewhat surprising that the teaching of listening strategies and techniques has not received a more prominent place in many English curricula. This was often due to the logistics of listening, dating back to when technology was not readily available and the materials were harder to find. However, listening is becoming more integrated into the daily lesson and it is receiving more attention from many teachers. As a result, it is important to include some advice about it in these notes.

### **The process of listening:**

If we think about the various steps a listener goes through before he or she understands the meaning of a message and acts upon it, we will realize the difficulties a student faces while listening.

The student has to distinguish specific sounds from each other. The student then has to divide the sounds into words and keep the meaningful pieces of the language in the **short-term memory**. However, a listener is not a recorder. The listener interprets it in the light of his or her background knowledge and the

purpose for listening. The listener also determines whether the information is needed in the **long-term memory** or only the short-term memory.

Some of the difficulties a listener has include **discrimination** among distinctive sounds, **stress, rhythm**, and intonation. Think about the difference in meaning between the following examples, which, if spoken, would be expressed by rhythm and intonation.

“Julia,” said Olena, “isn’t here.”

Julia said, “Olena isn’t here.”

The listener also has to recognize **reduced forms** of words, word order, and key words. He or she has to guess the meaning from the context and adjust listening strategies to different kinds of listening purposes. Above all, the listener has to use his or her background knowledge and experience to make inferences, predict outcomes and understand relationships among ideas. All of this shows just how complex and active listening is.

### **Listening and reading:**

Both listening and reading draw on knowledge of language, including the vocabulary, grammatical structures, experience or background of the listener and reader as well as the situational or contextual clues in order to understand the meaning of the message. The two skills are often thought of as passive, although as we have seen, they are more active than many teachers may realize.

There are basic differences between reading and listening. The reader reads at his or her own **pace**, pausing occasionally to consult a dictionary or the teacher. The listener does not have these options. Listening is controlled by the pace of the speaker, the speaker’s choice of vocabulary, and grammar. The listener cannot be inattentive for one moment; otherwise important parts of the message may be lost. There is no opportunity to go back to what has been said, and sometimes it is impossible to ask for the information to be repeated.

### **Listening activities:**

As with reading, listening can be divided in three stages:

- **pre-listening**
- **during-listening**
- **post-listening**

Again, there are similarities between these stages in the listening and reading lesson. In the **pre-listening stage**, students should be introduced to the listening through activities such as analyzing a title, picture, or diagram. They may discuss content, vocabulary, and expectations of content. In the **during-listening stage**, they should be asked to focus on the important ideas in the text. During the **post-listening stage**, students may answer comprehension questions, but they should also be given opportunities to consolidate what they have learned by linking it to other lessons or to their own lives or situations wherever possible.

Many of these sites have good listening practice, along with their texts:

**American English:** <http://americanenglish.state.gov>

**You Tube:** [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

**TED: ideas worth spreading.** This site offers lectures from experts and others on a wide range of topics. [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)

**Free video lectures:** This site offers university lectures from actual US universities and international universities on a variety of subjects. [freevideolectures.com](http://freevideolectures.com)

There are also free podcasts available from stable sites, including:

**National Public Radio:** current news programs as well as podcasts on economics, politics, art, and science from the United States.

[http://www.npr.org/rss/podcast/podcast\\_directory.php](http://www.npr.org/rss/podcast/podcast_directory.php)

**Learn out loud:** topics ranging from art and poetry to United States history.

<http://www.learnoutloud.com/>

## **Best Practices in Writing Instruction**

### **The role of writing:**

Writing has long been considered an important language skill, but unlike the other three skills students practice, there is something permanent that results from writing. Traditionally, the final product has been emphasized in writing classes; this is known as the **product-approach** to writing. Teachers typically attempt to evaluate how correct or accurate a piece of writing is, especially the grammar and vocabulary usage.

### **Modern approaches to teaching writing:**

Although the final product of students' writing is still important, including accurate grammar and vocabulary usage, it is more beneficial to students to consider the process of their writing. In other words, the students gain more when we focus on the steps to writing a piece of work. This is called the **process-approach** to writing. There are several elements in the process approach to writing, including:

- helping students to understand the composing process
- helping students to discover what they want to say
- giving students time to write and rewrite
- placing importance on the process of revision
- encouraging feedback from both the instructor and their peers

As mentioned above, an important feature of the process-approach to writing is the **revision process**, or the process of self-reviewing and modifying one's work. This is an important element not only because it helps the students to improve their writing and language skills, but also because it reduces the teacher's correction time. More importantly, it allows the teacher to comment specifically instead of spending a lot of time addressing everything.

## **Best Practices in Speaking Instruction**

### **The role of speaking:**

In the past, the purpose of speaking instruction was to focus on correct pronunciation. Similarly, teachers often interrupted students to correct each error they made, whether meaning was affected or not. As a result, many students were afraid to speak in the classroom.

### **Modern approaches to speaking instruction:**

Nowadays, there is less of an emphasis on perfect pronunciation and grammatically perfect speech. Of course, pronunciation is important in that if a speaker's pronunciation very difficult to understand, there may be communication problems. And, there may be errors in grammar, such as incorrect use of tense or subject pronouns, which can lead to miscommunication. However, many of the errors students make when speaking don't have an impact on their ability to communicate. As a result, it is often more helpful for students if you allow simple errors to pass without correction. This will lead to more confident students who are more willing to take risks with their speaking, and participate happily!

Having students discuss questions in pairs or groups is quite beneficial. By allowing students to discuss amongst themselves first, teachers can move around the room and listen to many students speaking. The teacher can then call on specific students, pairs, or groups to share their ideas with the class, thereby generating a class discussion.

## **Mixed-Ability Classrooms**

### **Mixed-ability challenges:**

Mixed-ability classrooms present obvious challenges. Students who are more advanced than the class average may finish quickly and become bored. They may then disrupt other students and prevent them from finishing their work. Students who are not at the level of the average may find themselves frustrated quickly and unable or unwilling to go further with the assignment's lesson.

Teachers of mixed-ability classrooms often find that they have classroom management issues to attend to, and they may also find that they don't have enough material to occupy the advanced students while they help those who are struggling.

### **Mixed-ability solutions:**

Seating arrangements can help in mixed-ability classrooms. Although physical comfort is essential, how students feel or think is more important. Students of all ability levels are always in control of their own learning, and unless they feel they are active members of one **learning community** with the teacher on their side, the value of meaningful interaction will be minimized. Far too often, fixed seats in rows make it difficult for students to see each other and work with each

other. The rows force all students to look to the front, thus encouraging the teacher to be the center of the class, not the students. By arranging seats in a semi-circle or square, you can accomplish three important goals:

- a student-centered class, where students are focused on each other instead of you
- a cohesive learning community, where students can have meaningful interaction with all class members, not just the one next to them
- a mixed-ability support arrangement in which more advanced students can work with weaker students

If you seat your students so that stronger students are working with weaker students for pair and group work activities, this will increase the likelihood of the weaker students improving. It will also prevent the stronger students from racing ahead and finish their work far ahead of the others. More importantly, this will reinforce the idea of a learning community in which all students of all levels participate and feel valued.

Of course, there are practical limits to the ability levels you can seat together, but this will become obvious to you early on in the semester. You may find that it is as much an issue of personality as language ability in finding successful seating arrangements.

Another way you can successfully manage a mixed-ability class is by using **peer-teaching**. For example, if you are teaching a grammar point, use the more advanced students as peer aids. They can assist you at the board, writing example sentences or helping other students in the class. Some teachers may resist using peer-teaching because it may be seen as undermining their role as the authority or expert in the class, but it is possible to use peer-teaching and retain the respect of the students. You may do this by rotating students who act as peer teachers or limiting their use.

It is also important to always have a more advanced activity ready for the more advanced students. It is typically easier to make an activity more difficult. For example, add more difficult vocabulary, or add another task, or include more reading for those more advanced students.

## **Best Practices Error Correction**

### **Errors as a natural part of learning:**

Making errors, or mistakes, is a natural part of the learning process. There may be interference from the students' first language, which may result in a variety of errors, including errors in pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and so on. However, other errors, such as forgetting to add –s to third personal singular verbs, are typically made by many students, regardless of language background. Additionally, errors may simply be the result of a student's individual progression of language development.

It is important for us as teachers to understand that all students will make errors no matter how much they study or try not to make them. More importantly,

teachers should help their students understand that making errors is a natural part of learning. If students are afraid to make errors, they may remain silent. As a result, they may not learn very much. On the other hand, students who understand that making errors is natural are more likely to make progress.

### **Techniques for correcting spoken errors:**

There are several ways in which spoken errors may be corrected in the classroom. One of the biggest challenges for teachers is to decide which method to use. It is important that error correction be supportive. In other words, the students should feel that the error correction is helping them to learn and is not simply pointing out every instance in which they are wrong.

When a student makes a spoken error, you may stop the student and encourage him or her to **self-correct** by gesturing or asking for repetition. You can further aid the student's self-correction by repeating the error with a rising or questioning intonation.

Self-correction is an effective way for students to learn because they must think about their use of the language. It is more likely that they will remember how to avoid the error when they are in a similar situation again.

**Peer correction** is another technique for correcting spoken errors. In peer correction, the teacher calls on other students to correct the error. This is an effective way to correct errors for several reasons:

- It keeps the rest of the class engaged while one student is speaking.
- It promotes a learning community atmosphere by showing that language learning is cooperative and supportive because students can help each other to learn.
- It makes the class more student-centered and reduces the teacher's domination of the class.

Another option you may choose is **drilling**. Drilling is frequently used in the presentation and practice of language. However, it is also valuable in error correction. You can drill a language point with the whole class, rows of students, or individual students. This technique is particularly effective for addressing an error made by many students, or when you do not want to draw attention to the student who made the error.

Finally, you can correct a spoken error using the technique of **expansion**. In this technique, you expand on a partially correct or incomplete answer. For example, you may repeat the answer and expand on it by adding important information at the end. This technique is supportive because it acknowledges that the student was correct in some way, but it also provides additional relevant information.

### **Techniques for correcting written errors:**

Correcting written errors can be approached in much the same way as correcting spoken errors. There are several techniques available to teachers.

Within the writing lesson, you may ask the students to first assess their own work. This provides the opportunity for self-correction. It allows the students to catch any careless mistakes, such as misspellings, omitted or duplicated words. It is also an opportunity for students to notice things they aren't sure of. Self-correcting is valuable because it makes students think about their use of English, and they are more likely to remember correct usage in the future.

Peer correction is another technique for correction of written errors. Peer correction is an important step in the writing process. Before students give their writing to you for your correction, there should be an opportunity for students to review each other's work. This helps students to take responsibility for their learning. It also reinforces that language learning is cooperative. You can conduct peer correction in different ways. Students can work in pairs or groups. You can ask them to focus on the vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and punctuation only, or you can ask them to focus on those elements as well as the ideas and content. It all depends on the level of your class.

In addition to the traditional technique of the teacher correcting each piece of writing, it is possible to use **collective correction** to address common errors. After you have corrected all students' work, you may notice frequent errors. You can take examples of the frequently made errors and put them on the board for the class to correct. It may be a good idea to use this technique once you have established a supportive learning community since some students may be sensitive about seeing their work on the board as an example of an error!

### **Final Thoughts**

Teaching is a demanding profession. Most teachers have too little time to do the things that are expected of them, so the thought of doing anything extra or differently can be very difficult. Moreover, it's difficult to change! We are all creatures of habit and enjoy our routines. However, no matter how long you have been teaching, you and your students can benefit from trying new things, new approaches, or new techniques. Try one new thing each month or each week, such as a new seating arrangement or presentation technique. If it doesn't work, think about *why* it didn't work and if there's something you can change. Then, try again!



## List of Online Resources

The below list is not meant to contain everything out there on the Internet. There are many more websites to help you with finding additional materials for your lessons, ideas for new lessons, practicing your English, etc. Use the following as a starting point, and continue to look for other resources on your own, or ask other English teachers and PCVs for the tools and websites that they find most useful.

### EFL / ESL dedicated resources

#### ***Randall's Cyber Listening Lab***

This website contains listening activities and quizzes, vocabulary lessons, and language learning / life tips. Start on the "first visit" link to find out how to get the most out of this helpful site.

<http://www.esl-lab.com/>

#### ***Boggles World***

There are lots of great holiday worksheets, creative writing topics, survival English, business English, ESL for adults, activities for young learners, and lesson plans.

<http://bogglesworldesl.com/>

#### ***English Club***

On the right-hand side of the screen is a list of teaching resources (Activities, Worksheets, etc. – most with answer keys). On the left, there are links to teaching tips and tricks, articles and a teacher forum.

<http://www.englishclub.com/teach-english.htm>

### Lesson Plans by Topic / Theme & Other Resources

#### ***Busy Teacher***

This is a great website with 11,000+ resources, provided by many different teachers. There are worksheets by topic / season / month, grammar practice worksheets, and specific activities for all four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). In addition, there are great ESL articles with tips on teaching certain things in the classroom, as well as free puzzle generators and hundreds of warm-ups and fillers. The website is free to use, but you must register with an email address first in order to download and print resources.

<http://busyteacher.org/>

[http://busyteacher.org/teaching\\_ideas\\_and\\_techniques/warmers/](http://busyteacher.org/teaching_ideas_and_techniques/warmers/)

#### ***Using English***

The teacher's part of this website has free ESL handouts and quizzes (with teacher notes and answers, where appropriate), PDF lesson plans (organized by level, grammar topic or theme), teacher articles, and a list of websites containing teaching and reference resources.

<http://www.usingenglish.com/teachers/>

### ***TEFLnet***

This website has various lesson plans already prepared, both with a student worksheet and the teacher's notes, as well as tips for teaching English. Click on the "ESL Lesson Planning" link to find lesson plans by theme.

<http://tefl.net/>

### ***ESL 4 Teachers***

Containing weekly-featured topics, there are a lot of links to other websites that have great resources and/or lesson plans by theme.

<http://www.esl4teachers.com/>

### ***ESL Flow***

With many lesson plans by topic and links to other online resources, you can search by proficiency level, topic or skill set. This is a great website to get ideas for making your own materials, but it is also easy to find what you need to supplement your prepared lesson. There is also an extensive list of speaking and icebreaker activities ("Best of Speaking"). The "Teacher Tools" section is also an excellent resource.

<http://www.eslflow.com/>

### ***Everything ESL***

There are 40+ lesson plans for beginning through intermediate students. Many of these are geared towards American culture, holidays or history.

<http://www.everythingesl.net/lessons/>

## **World News in English**

### ***BBC – Learning English***

There are many short written and audio reports about current world events, with new vocabulary and definitions included.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/index.shtml>

### ***Breaking News English***

Keeping up to date with current news, you can read about current events based on your level of English. This website has Levels 0-6, with corresponding activities and reading levels, as well as mini two-page lessons that take a much shorter time to complete.

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/>

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/mini\\_lessons.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/mini_lessons.html)

### ***English Club – Listen to News***

Weekly updates containing short audio news reports in easy English, each news story begins with new vocabulary, and follows up with gap fill activities and comprehension questions.

<http://edition.englishclub.com/category/listening-news/>

## Create-Your-Own Puzzles / Worksheets

### ***ESL Flow – Tools for Teachers***

You can create sentence / paragraph scramblers, crossword puzzles, graphs, and quizzes / surveys / tests. There is also a great “vocabulary handout maker”, where you choose the topic and label each preloaded picture with your vocabulary words.

<http://www.eslflow.com/ToolsforTeacher.html>

### ***TEFLnet – Worksheet Generator***

There are a few templates you can use to make basic worksheets for your students (look at “Good For” tip for ideas on when to use which template).

<http://tefl.net/worksheet-generator/index.htm>

## Websites for Practicing English (Teachers and Students)

### ***Using English***

There are many grammar and vocabulary quizzes to take, reading comprehension activities and grammar references for practice. English tests can also be taken, and users can keep up with their scores over time to see how they are improving. Users must first register for free.

<http://www.usingenglish.com/>

### ***Randall’s Cyber Listening Lab***

This site has great practice for students, especially listening exercises.

<http://www.esl-lab.com/>

### ***American English – Trace Effects Game***

This is a great video game for students who want to play computer games, but also want to learn American English and culture. Users must register with an email address, but it is free.

<http://americanenglish.state.gov/trace-effects>

### ***English Grammar – Rules Review***

Contains a brief, basic review of grammar (nouns, verbs, etc.). Other helpful links within the website are listed on the left-hand side of the screen.

<http://www.englishgrammar.org/rules-review/>

### ***English Page***

Students can review items on their own, and even takes quizzes on grammar and other topics. There are also links to various newspapers, magazines, and public radio for them to practice listening and reading legitimate English reports. Great for teachers to brush up on their English as well!

<http://www.englishpage.com/>

### ***English Club***

English lessons are online here for students to learn new things and then practice what they know. There are also interactive pages like forums and games to practice English in a more fun way.

<http://www.englishclub.com/learn-english.htm>

## Government / International Sponsored Sites

### ***American English***

This is a great Department of State resource for teaching and learning about American English and culture. There are many resources for teachers' professional development, including training programs and distance education courses. The "English Teaching Forum" is the online equivalent of the magazine that is published quarterly by the US state government. Teachers can search the Forum by topic, but also use the "Resources for Teachers" and "American Culture" for lesson plans and resources that are sorted by topic, audience, level or skill.

<http://americanenglish.state.gov/>

### ***British Council***

Specifically focused on British English, this website has so many different resources for teaching and learning English. For teaching resources, there are activity ideas, lesson plans, and teaching tips, as well sections on teacher training and development. For learning English, there are dedicated websites for different audiences: kids, teens, adults, business English, etc. (see the British Council website specifically for Ukraine for these sites) If students and/or teachers have smart phones or tablets, there is even a link to various Apps that can be downloaded to practice English on the go.

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/>

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/ua/en/english/learn-online>

<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/>

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/>

### ***United Nations – English Language Program***

The United Nations offers intensive English language courses at its headquarters in New York, but also online resources. The "Resources for Teachers" contains links for lessons and materials, as well as English teaching journals and periodicals. The "Recommended Websites" lists several additional links and what each is good for. Some of the links mentioned above are on that list as well.

<http://www.un.org/depts/OHRM/sds/lcp/English/resourcesforteachers.html>

<http://www.un.org/depts/OHRM/sds/lcp/English/recommendedwebsites.html>

There is also a free online study course where you can improve your English while also learning more about the United Nations and its history.

<http://www.unepd.info/>

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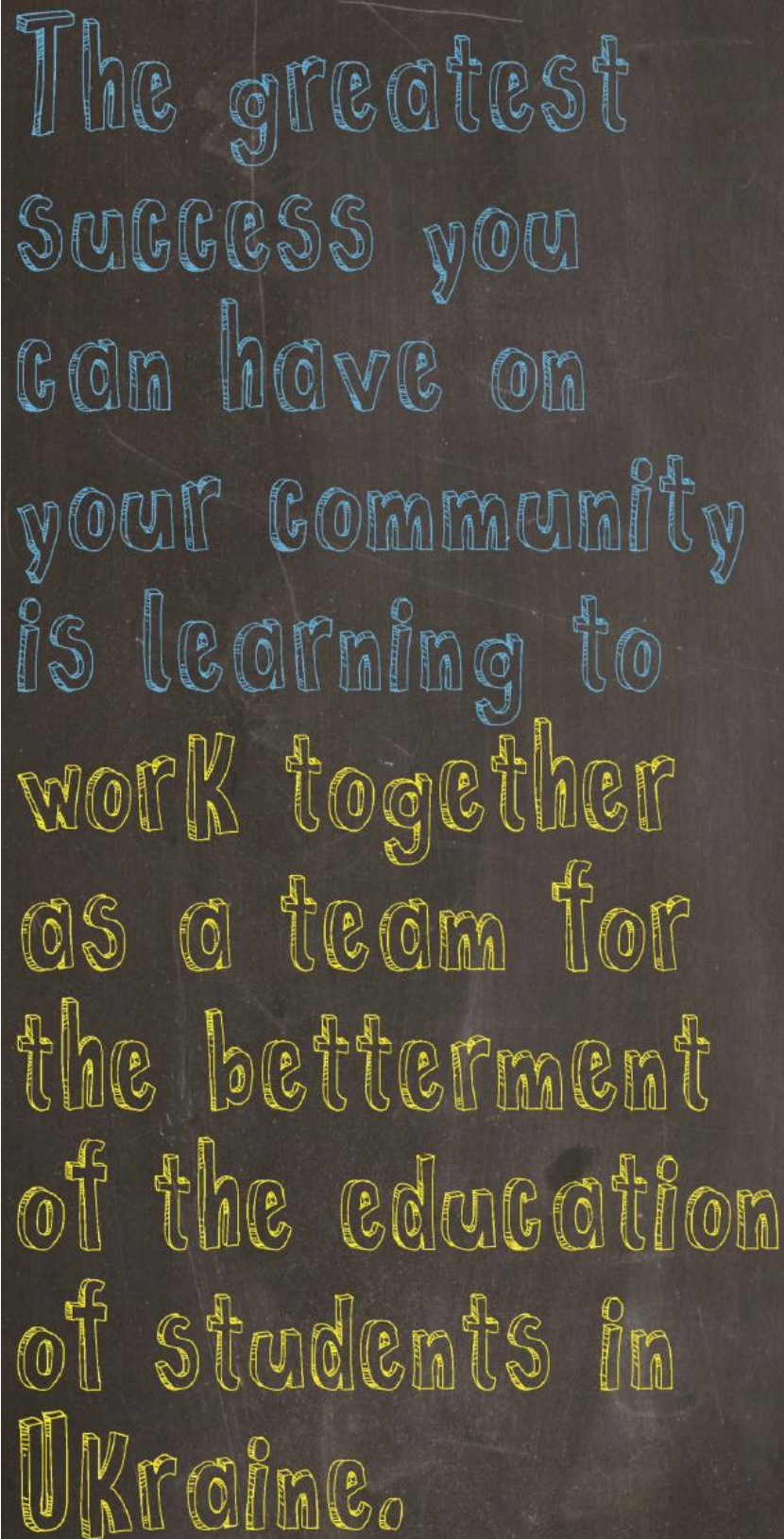
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