



Teaching at Dolphin School

Positive Reinforcement

The most important aspect of teaching at our school is the relationship built between the teacher and their students. Understanding each child, and their strengths and weaknesses is vital for successful teaching and learning. Take time to get to know everyone and help them get to know you.

Always remain positive and patient with the students and use praise rather than punishment whenever possible. It is important for the students to behave respectfully towards their teacher however. Set high, clear, standards for your class. For example, students should stand when they reply to a teacher, and wait for permission before sitting again. Students should also wait to be dismissed at the end of the class.

There are basic rules that all students should know – they are printed in each classroom – remind the students about them occasionally.

1. No eating in class.
2. No toys in class.
3. Listen to your teacher.
4. Do your homework.

The students love their work to be marked and a percentage score given, or 'very good' or other remark written in red ink. You can mark homework in class, while your students are doing other written work, or collect the books and mark outside of class time.

Homework

All students should be assigned homework each day. Spelling practice is especially useful for the lower levels. Written work should be able to be completed in 20 minutes maximum.

In the Classroom

Students like to sit with their friends, and boys and girls usually do not want to sit next to each other, but it is the teacher's prerogative to assign seating so that the class works well. If students are too chatty, or are consistently copying from each other, they should be separated. It is also a good idea to move students around, so that the same students are not always at the front, or back, of the classroom.

Building good relationships in the classroom is vital to successful teaching. Learn the names of your students, and make sure that they know how to pronounce yours. Speak slowly and clearly and do not use idioms/colloquialisms. For lower levels, teach your students key phrases: listen, quiet, open your book, wash your hands, can I go to the toilet? ('toilet' is enough for the lowest levels).

The alphabet

Capital letters are very confusing to those who do not have them in their alphabet. Use them only when grammatically correct. We do not teach them in Levels 1 and 2, only the lower case.

Always print plainly and carefully, especially in the lower levels. No cursive, or added flourishes which confuse the students. Details such as gaps between words can be confusing to our students, so be clear about whether or not there is a gap.

Numbers

We begin teaching number words in Level 3. Until that time, we use only symbols. For example: 8 (L1 and 2), eight (L3 and up).

Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking

All of these skills are vital to successful language learning. Make sure that your students have the opportunity to practice them all every week. Children in Cambodia are taught to learn using memory and rote. Teaching the letter sounds will help with reading skills. Simple dictations improve listening skills. Allowing for small mistakes in writing and speaking without constant correction, depending on the student's level, will increase confidence in these skills.

Monthly Topics

Please always follow the monthly topic plans. Do not change, or add to the vocabulary without discussion with Mr. Yuth.

Planning

Use the information in the class file to plan each lesson. Write your lesson plan in the file, and record how successful or not, it was. Allow for flexibility in the week for bad weather, many students absent, or students learning faster or more slowly than you expected. Don't rush them. There should always be time to explain again, or practice more.

Lessons

Introduce new vocabulary slowly. One or two new words will be remembered much better than a list of ten, especially at the lower levels.

Games

In some cultures, 'learning through play' is an accepted norm, but this is not the case in Cambodia. The parents of our students prefer their children to study in a more traditional manner. Activities can be introduced into class if they are educationally relevant, and do not cause disruption to the other classes. Higher level students, for example, can work together in small teams to compete against each other in spelling or grammar exercises. Students must remain in the classroom for all activities.

Library/Games Room time (4-5pm, Monday to Friday) is the perfect time to play games with the students.

Rewards

The students, of course, love to be recognized for their hard work and ability. A star chart on the board works well for younger students, where hard work and compliance in class can be rewarded. If you wish to give a physical reward, please do so fairly, and avoid giving candy. Fruit or pens make a better prize.

Local Relevance

Our students have very limited experience of the world beyond this area. While expanding their knowledge is a good thing, please ensure that all vocabulary taught is relevant to them.

Examples.

Food. People in Cambodia do not eat with a knife and fork, or even always sit at a table to eat.

Vegetables. 'Western' vegetables are very expensive here. Carrots, for example, are a luxury. They are not eaten by horses or rabbits!

Houses. Many families live in one room. There is very little furniture, and people sleep on the floor, a mat, or a hammock.

Transport. In Kratie, there are no trains or planes. The English words for van, Khmer tractor, and tuk tuk are more important.

For older students, with more knowledge of the outside world, some 'general knowledge' is a good thing, but think about whether the vocabulary you are teaching is going to be useful to them.

Rainy Days

At some times of the year, class, or student numbers, might be disrupted by rain. It's a good idea to have a Plan B, a relevant activity for your students to do if you have five students instead of your expected fifteen. It could be a good time for extra spelling practice, or to have a book from the library with a relevant story or pictures.

If you are unsure about any aspect of teaching at DSE, please discuss it with Mr Yuth.