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# **A Framework for Prep-free Lessons 1**

Integrated Lessons Based on Student Talk

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*Methods and activities for more effective teaching with less preparation*

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## Introduction

**A Framework for Prep-Free Lessons 1** is actually a collection of six lesson frameworks that can be used with no planning and little preparation. The collection is designated with the number 1 because it was the first of a series of three distinct frameworks for planning-free lessons which I developed. The other two (FPFL 2 and FPFL 3) were published in English Teaching Professional magazine under the titles “The Teacher as Input” and “The Text as Input”. The six frameworks making up FPFL 1 were grouped together because they all evolved from a language teaching method known as Community Language Learning. CLL focused on language which naturally emerged from the students and because of that it could be used at any time without any prior planning. However, as indicated below, CLL has some limitations and the adaptations were created in order to eliminate those limitations yet still keep its advantages, particularly the lack of planning and the focus on emergent language. Each adaptation is described in this handout and although each one was developed to address a limitation of its predecessor, all are useful, and could be used in alternation.

The adaptations are all conversation-based lessons and share a similar format. Each one starts with an activity for the students to choose the discussion topic, such as brainstorming. The frameworks described in this document feature different activities for choosing the topics but actually these opening activities are all interchangeable and any activity which gets students to decide on the topic can be used with any of the frameworks.

Each framework has a discussion stage where the teacher uses a particular method for collecting errors from each student’s contribution to the discussion. The discussions themselves come in two formats, whole class and pair, and both could be used in alternation with a particular class.

The next phase in each framework is a clarification stage, where the teacher deals with some of the errors that were collected from the discussion. It is expected that the teacher will focus more on the significant and high frequency errors. Corrections and explanations can be either elicited from students or provided by the teacher. The teacher should also provide some focus on form and meaning and, where appropriate, pronunciation of the corrected utterance. Teachers who might be reluctant to explain the grammar involved in certain errors can do it in a subsequent class, even to the extent, for relatively new teachers, of leaving most of the grammar explanations to the next class.

Every version ends with a controlled practice stage where the students get to use the corrected utterance (or in one case, the uncorrected) productively, such as in a conversation. There are different controlled practice stages featured in the frameworks and, again, they are often interchangeable and often other controlled practice activities can be used instead.

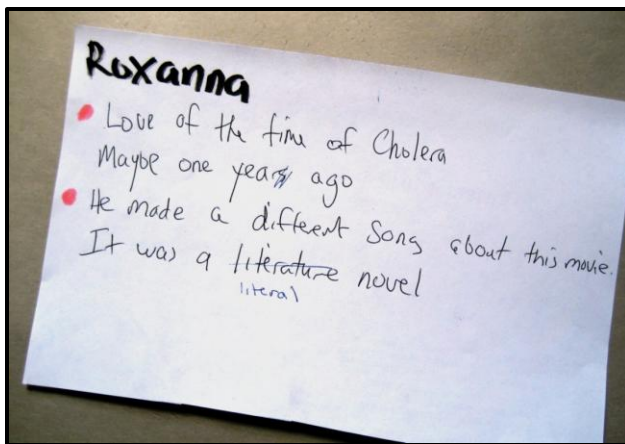
## FPFL 1b: Group Discussion (with papers)

This version is very similar to the previous one except it eliminates the need for transparencies, special pens and the overhead projector. The students still remain in the circle but anybody can speak at any time and at any length. It is important that only one student speak at a time, but this is desirable for any group discussion. The teacher sits at a desk as part of the circle and does not speak, just listens carefully for any errors the students make. The teacher has a sheet of paper (or half sheet) with each student's name at the top. Whenever that student says something which could be corrected, the teacher writes down exactly what the student said on their paper. As the discussion progresses, if the teacher has nothing written down from a particular student, the teacher holds up that student's paper (with name visible) as a signal that that student needs to speak more.

When the teacher decides to end the class discussion, the clarification stage begins. This stage begins with the teacher pairing up the students' papers so each pair has roughly the same number of errors. Then the students are paired up according to the paper pairs and they are given their papers to correct. They work together to try to correct their errors and the teacher walks around to offer help when they need it. Whenever the teacher spots an error or a useful structure which he/she feels is worth sharing with the whole class, the teacher puts a mark beside it on the student's paper and tells that student to write it up on the board. This collection of significant errors and useful structures should end up to be 10 – 20 in number at the end of the correction phase.

The controlled practice stage gets the students using the collected structures from the whiteboard in a conversation. They are in groups of three and one student counts how many the other two can use in a natural conversation. The teacher then stops them and gets another student to count so the student who had been counting gets a turn to speak also. The teacher elicits the total number of uses of the structure from each team of three to determine a winner.

**Sample student error paper with marks for addition to board**



## FPFL 1b Framework: Group Discussion (with papers)

**Main Aim:** raise students' awareness of common lexical/grammatical errors in their speech

**Sub Aim:** fluency

**Materials:** two sheets paper, blue-tak or tape, ½ sheets of paper (1 per student), board markers

Stage & Aims	Focus	Procedure	Time*	ARC**
<b>Intro B: Corner to Corner</b> relax S's, allow for latecomers and provide material for next stage	whole class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put a paper with the words, "I really like it." at the right end of a wall of the classroom. Put a paper with the words, "I really dislike it." at the left end of the wall.</li> <li>Get students to line up along the wall of the classroom. State a topic and students have to position themselves along the wall according to how much they like or dislike the topic (ends of wall are the extremes, middle is neutral).</li> <li>Continue calling out topics and/or have students call some out. Choose most popular topic by how many students end up at right.</li> </ul>	10	A
<b>Class Discussion A: Random</b> fluency and collecting errors for next stage	whole class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put students in circle and explain to them that they will have a group discussion, but only one student speaks at a time.</li> <li>Write each student's name on a half-sheet of paper.</li> <li>Tell them you will be writing down errors and if you ever hold up a blank paper with a student's name on it, it's a signal to get that student speaking as he/she has not said enough to have made any errors.</li> <li>Start discussion and whenever a student makes an error write it within the context on their paper.</li> <li>If you need errors from a student, hold up their paper as a signal to get that person talking. Try not to speak during the discussion.</li> </ul>	20	A
<b>Error Correction B: Paper Pairs</b> focus on accuracy and identify common errors	S-S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End discussion and pair up the papers so each pair has around the same number of errors to correct.</li> <li>Pair up students according to the paper pairings.</li> <li>Monitor while students work together to correct their errors and if you see any errors worth sharing or any useful structures, put a mark beside them and tell the student to write up the incorrect utterance on the board (10 – 20 total).</li> </ul>	15	C
<b>Clarification B: Paper Pairs</b> focus on lexical/grammatical form and meaning	T-Ss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take up the errors on the board eliciting corrections and reasons why, when possible. Focus on form, meaning and pronunciation, when appropriate.</li> <li>Focus on useful structures and point out variations of them, when necessary.</li> </ul>	20	C
<b>Controlled Practice B: Threes</b>	S-S-S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put students in groups of 3 and get them speaking about the topic using the corrected structures that you wrote on the board. One student serves as judge and counts how many the other two use (If you need to have a group of 4 students, have a judge for each speaker).</li> <li>Change the judges to give the other students a chance to speak.</li> <li>Get the totals from each group to determine a winning team.</li> </ul>	10	R

\* times can and will vary \*\* ARC = Authentic use of language, Restricted use of language, Clarification of language

## Variations

Note that many stages are interchangeable

- Use any **Intro** to choose the topic.
- Any **Discussion** stage below can be followed by any of the **Error Correction** methods.
- **Error Correction** stages A and B can be followed by any appropriate **Controlled Practice** stage.

