**Teaching Tip: The Silent Teacher Approach for Grammar**

**Requires: 3x5 cards, markers, whiteboard**

**Level: Adjustable**

Teaching English as a Second Language requires teachers to break habits acquired from earlier experiences as a learner. In particular, many learners associate teachers as people who lecture and grade, but this is not how ESL teaching (for the most part) works. ESL teaching is a type of training, whereby the teacher is acting more as a coach. This means that teacher talking time has to be reduced, and the role of the teacher is to get the students to do a lot of thinking and interacting.

One way I do this is by reviewing my lesson plans and reconsider anything I’m doing that the students can do without me doing all of the work for them. For example, if my LP says to explain something, there’s no reason I can’t give examples and ask questions, or even have students explain the examples. I can also have students guess rules and definitions before I give them, purposely calling on students who are likely to know the answers, then calling on students who might be able to give examples based on what they’ve just learned.

**Here’s an example how to teach grammar without EXPLAINING the grammar rules or giving all of the answers.**

I write a sentence on the board based on a GRAMMATICAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE.

Yesterday the phone rang while I was studying

Yesterday phone rang while study

Yesterday the phone rang while I study

Class: Votes on which was correct, then teacher (without explaining) erases the incorrect sentences.

Class is then broken down into two sections. Both have to write something they did yesterday after noon on a 3x5 card. Next, each student has to find another student. They then have to make a sentence similar to the ones on the board using their two verbs. The students come up and write their sentences on the board.

The students can make mistakes, but should look at the model sentence and then try to help each other figure out the correct answer checking each other’s work. Teacher offers hints without saying anything by walking over to the students and pointing to the model sentences or other correct sentences.

The teacher then goes through the student examples on the board and asks the class which sentences are correct, to point out mistakes, and if there are mistakes to explain them, then elicits grammatical terminology and tries to make a rule with the class. Class ends with a formative assessment.