

# **Ideas for teaching advanced level students**

**Lewis Richards**

**[Lewis.Richards@lsi-Portsmouth.co.uk](mailto:Lewis.Richards@lsi-Portsmouth.co.uk)**



# LSI PORTSMOUTH

Le Cafe Parisien

Le Cafe Parisien

AMPTIA  
AMPTIA  
AMPTIA

LSI PORTSMOUTH



Information  
Information  
Information



# Discuss

1. Do you teach a lot of advanced classes? What do you enjoy about them?
2. What challenges do you face as a teacher at this level?
3. What exercise types and strategies do you use in advanced classes?

# Things I've heard teachers say about advanced classes

- “Oh, it's really scary”
- “But what do you teach high levels?”
- “What if they catch me out?”
- “I bet their grammar is better than mine”
- “But they know everything already”
- “It's so much more work than intermediate”

## Some features of C1+ learners

- Lots of exposure to grammar (either explicit or implicit)
- Good communicative ability – but not totally naturally
- Can function with ease in English/mix with other students
- Tend to be pretty motivated
- Often feel ‘I’m not making any progress’
- Been to other language schools in the past?

Key points  
to consider

# Lexis

1. How do you decide what lexis to teach at advanced levels?
2. How much lexical input is necessary?
3. How do you present and practice lexis?
4. How much of the content of a typical class is emerging language?



# Lexis

Students really want to be natural and understand native speakers

- collocations and phrases
- options and variations
- phrasal verbs – but in context
- opposites and limits
- increase role of colligation
- ‘what would I say?’

- explore and expand on vocabulary
- avoid single words
- avoid infinitives
- definitions: need examples

## Issues:

- what to choose
- how much to write on the board
- how to practise it

# Phrasal Verbs

- How do you teach phrasal verbs to advanced learners?
- How do you decide which verbs to teach?
- How do you practice them in a meaningful way?

- Put into contextualised examples
- Go with meaning first
- Do transformation practice
- Personalised discussions
- Speaking games
- I have a rough corpus of the top 80 phrasal verbs – you can have it!

1. When the normal teacher was sick, another one \_\_\_\_\_ him.
2. I'm feeling really rough today – I think I'm \_\_\_\_\_ a cold.
3. I haven't \_\_\_\_\_ my sister for a while – I wonder how she's doing.
4. I know the result wasn't as good as you expected, but don't let it \_\_\_\_\_.
5. It was a major operation, and she was seriously ill, but she managed to \_\_\_\_\_.

1. When the normal teacher was sick, another one ***stood in for*** him.
2. I'm feeling really rough today – I think ***I'm coming down with*** a cold.
3. I haven't ***heard from*** my sister for a while – I wonder how she's doing.
4. I know the result wasn't as good as you expected, but don't let it ***get you down***.
5. It was a major operation, and she was seriously ill, but she managed to ***pull through***.

1. Fortunately, my grandfather survived the operation and now he's ok. **PULL**  
The operation was quite serious, but luckily \_\_\_\_\_ and now he's ok.
2. My best friend hasn't written to me for a long time – I hope she's ok. **FROM**  
It's been ages \_\_\_\_\_ my best friend – I hope..
3. There was a replacement teacher yesterday, because our normal teacher was on holiday. **FOR**  
A replacement teacher \_\_\_\_\_ teacher yesterday.
4. I've been sneezing all morning – I think I'm started to get a cold. **DOWN**  
I've been sneezing all morning – I think \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I know you did badly in your reading test, but try not to be too depressed about it – it's only one exam. **DOWN**  
I know you did badly in your reading test, but don't \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Is there anyone you haven't h\_\_\_\_\_ f\_\_\_\_\_ for a while? Do you know why?
2. If you do badly in an exam, does it g\_\_\_\_\_ you d\_\_\_\_\_ for a long time, or do you bounce back quickly?
3. When was the last time you felt you were c\_\_\_\_\_ d\_\_\_\_\_ w\_\_\_\_\_ a cold? What did you do to try not to get sick?
4. Have you ever had a s\_\_\_\_\_ -i\_\_\_\_\_ teacher who was brilliant?



Let's play a game to practice  
the phrasal verbs

# Riff around key words

Common sets of words:

- point
- mind
- eye
- impression
- touch

## Example – go for meaning first

1. Do you have anything \_\_\_\_\_ mind for this weekend?
2. I've got my mind \_\_\_\_\_ on getting an A.
3. What's \_\_\_\_\_ your mind? You look worried.
4. We need to \_\_\_\_\_ in mind that there's a lot of traffic if we leave at 5 on a Friday.
5. I can't \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ my mind if I want to go out later or have an early night.

① I've got my mind set on getting an A.

② The exam is always in the back of my mind.

③ I can't concentrate because my interview tomorrow is on my mind.

④ Do you have anything in mind for this weekend?

⑤ To my mind, the best place in England is London.

⑥ Please make up your mind if you want to go or not.

⑦ Keep Bear in mind that the traffic is bad on Fridays, so I suggest leaving early.

① Let's keep stay in touch after the course.

② Unfortunately, after leaving university we lost touch.

③ We got back in touch last year through Facebook.

④ I've been trying to get in touch with Hoan this morning, but his phone is switched off.

⑤ After living abroad for ten years, I'm a bit out of touch with what's happening in British politics.

1. Do you have anything in mind for this weekend?
2. When did you last have something worrying on your mind?
3. Is there anything you've really got your mind set on?
4. Do you find it easy to make up your mind about big decisions?

# Things which come up

1. How long does it take you to get to school in the morning?
2. How long does it take you to get ready in the morning?
3. How long can you read in English without a break?
4. How long can you run for before you need a rest?

# Pre-plan lexis for speaking questions

- Have some speaking questions on a topic/theme
- Sketch out lexis you is just above students' level
- TTT and then board the gapped lexis
- Drill and practise

# Cities

1. What are the main problems facing cities?
2. How can these problems be addressed?



## Transport

The government could  
a subsidy (n)

cut  
slash

bus and tube fares [make it cheaper]

subsidise

public transport [pay more of the cost]

The government  
the suburbs  
outskirts

should  
allocate

more resources  
funds

to public transport. [more money]

should introduce

a congestion charge

[pay to drive]

road + oil

a park and ride scheme [leave your car]

The government could encourage  
another option:

car pooling

[sharing a car]

I wish the government would

increase tax on petrol

build more cycle lanes

To solve this problem, the government should

[be strict]

## Crime!

Put more police on patrol  
the beat

[where]

crack down on street crime

Have a zero-tolerance policy

on minor petty crime..

## Housing

Build more affordable homes  
council houses

Introduce a cap on private rents

I install more CCTV cameras

## Consonants

p	pen	t	she
b	bad	s	television
t	tea	h	hat
d	do	ʃ	chin
k	cat	dʒ	jump
g	go	m	man
f	fish	n	no
v	vet	ŋ	sing
θ	think	j	yes
ð	the	w	we
s	six	l	leg
z	zoo	r	red

## Vowels and Diphthongs

i	see	e	bet
ɪ	sit	ə	ago
ɛ	bed	ɔ	say

To solve  
 tackle  
 address  
 deal with  
 mitigate / minimise

the problem, the government should...  
a motorway toll

- impose higher taxes on cars
- introduce a congestion charge in the city centre
- ban cars from city centres at weekends
- build more cycle lanes
- invest more money in public transport
- allocate more resources to
- subsidise public transport to make it cheaper

- transport
- cars
- poverty
- housing
- pollution
- crime

encourage car pooling  
set up park and ride schemes

The police  
turn a blind  
eye to...

The police should crack down on petty crime  
have a zero-tolerance policy  
on litter

# Reformulation

- Opportunities to upgrade and improve students' language
- Say in a better/more natural way
- What the students want to say – more likely to go in
- Shows you're interested
- Students love it

# How?

- Board with gaps
- Get students to try to guess the upgrade
- Mini-speaking activities
- Questions and personalisation
- Add on to revision sheets for next class

I think I am likely staying in England after my course..

In Singapore the police always send you to jail for chewing gum..

I don't know if I go to university this year, or I take a year's break

There's a good c\_\_\_\_\_ that I  
\_\_\_\_\_ stay in England after my  
course...

The police have a z\_\_\_\_\_ -t\_\_\_\_\_  
policy on throwing chewing gum in  
the street in Singapore...

I'm in t\_\_\_\_\_ m\_\_\_\_\_ about  
whether to go to university this year,  
or take a gap year first

1. What are the chances of you staying in England after your course?
2. Do you think zero-tolerance policy on crime is effective? Are there some situations in which it's better to turn a blind eye? Why/why not?
3. Are you in two minds about what to do in the near future, or do you have it all planned out?

## Reformulate these

- I watched the whole first series of 'Orange is the new Black' in one day
- He's not at work today because he's ill
- It's a general rule, but it's not the law
- I was too lazy to do my homework
- The food has expired, so I don't want to eat it
- Which pub do you want to go to? I don't care.
- I'm from Spain. *Which part?*
- I'm not coming tonight. *Why not?*



- I b\_\_\_\_\_ -w\_\_\_\_\_ the whole first series of 'Orange is the new black' in one s\_\_\_\_\_
- He's o\_\_\_\_\_ sick today...[or: he's p\_\_\_\_\_ a s\_\_\_\_\_]
- It's the u\_\_\_\_\_ r\_\_\_\_\_ in Switzerland that you don't mow the grass on Sundays
- I c\_\_\_\_\_ be b\_\_\_\_\_ to do my homework/I didn't g\_\_\_\_\_ r\_\_\_\_\_ to doing my homework

'The food has expired,  
so I don't want to eat it'

This milk has g\_\_\_\_\_ o\_\_\_\_\_, I'm going to  
p\_\_\_\_\_ it away...

This bread has gone m\_\_\_\_\_, let's c\_\_\_\_\_  
it away...

These prawns are p\_\_\_\_\_ the b\_\_\_\_\_ b\_\_\_\_\_  
date, they are a bit dodgy

This bread is a bit s\_\_\_\_\_, let's use it to  
make breadcrumbs

# Revision sheets

- Maximise student processing time
- Cognitive effort
- Everyone does it
- Tailor it to the tangents in the lesson
- Students love it
- Easy revision aid before the exam

# Types of question

- What was the phrasal verb meaning 'replace a sick teacher'?
- What can you 'get over'?
- What is the verb which means 'lose your job through no fault of your own', and is it normally active or passive?

- What were the different meanings of 'pick up'?
- Hans talked about not eating red meat anymore – what was the phrasal verb you can use to say this? Can you make a sentence?
- Tell your partner five signs that you are r\_\_\_\_\_ to settle down.

# Personalised questions

- Generic question types
- Chance to interact and enjoy the language
- Gives you the chance to monitor and reformulate
- Students can make their own

Can you work out what this revision sheet was teaching?

How much of it do you think was planned, and how much was emerging language?



# Write down everything you remember

- Sounds boring, but it works
- In pairs, take one piece of paper, and write down all the vocabulary you can remember from the day before
- Competition/time limit

Other suggestions for  
practising and revising lexis

# Memorise the whiteboard

- Last 10 minute of the lesson
- Give students five minutes to memorise all the language on the board
- Work in pairs and write it down in the same place on the page
- Elicit back onto the board
- Test each other

# Pretend you're at a party

- Give students mingle questions
- Give them a plastic cup and tell them it's like a party
- Music on
- Mingle and chat

# Write a summary of the week

- Alternative to a test
- Much more demanding than a gap-fill test
- Shows what's been learnt and what needs more work
- Students really like it in my experience
- It's great for a student who goes on holiday – and makes them feel part of the class

*On Monday we studied some phrasal verbs. We learned the word 'call off', which means 'cancel'. For example, 'the football match was called off because of rain'. On Tuesday, we studied 'going to'. It's used to describe future plans. An example is 'In September, I'm going to start a masters degree at Portsmouth University'. On Wednesday.....*

# Make use of students' notes

- How often do you have a look at what your students are writing down?
- What can you do with their notes to get the most out of them, and help the lexis and grammar you've taught to stick?
- What would you do with these notes?

# Speaking

Using models to feed in  
language



# CAE Speaking Part 3

How might knowing a foreign language be useful for these purposes?

- relaxing
- going on a journey abroad
- finding out about the news
- doing further study
- getting a promotion at work



Phrases for giving opinions

Phrases for agreeing

Phrases for politely disagreeing

Phrases to ask your partner's opinion

Anything else interesting

## CAE Speaking Part 3

Now decide which one of these is the most useful



1. Which phrasal verb did we use to say 'not this option'?
2. How do you say 'instead of five options, let's choose between two'?
3. How do you say 'Let's choose X'?
4. How do you say it's 50-50 between these two options?
5. Anything else?

# Role of grammar

What is the role of grammar in advanced classes?

What grammar do you teach?

How do you teach it?

*Scarcely had I destroyed the evidence when the police arrived...*

*On seeing her brother she gave him a big hug...*

*It's high time you gave up playing computer games...*

*The house loomed out of the darkness. Also visible were several dogs guarding the door...*

*Into the room swaggered the Count...*

My aunt, who doesn't like cats,  
was given a kitten for  
Christmas.

My sister is the only person to  
whom I can talk.

He was eating a seagull when  
we found him.

While I was having a bath, the phone rang.

If you heat water to 100 degrees, it boils.

I love the sound of a young boy singing.



# Grammar

- Either: no idea about names and rules
- Or: can recite the rules to you by heart
- Why hasn't it 'gone in'?
- Has grammar been taught in context?
- Noticing rather than telling
- Mini-grammar exercises and drills

- Isolate usable aspects for speaking and writing
- 'Mini-grammar' drills: planned and spontaneous
- Boundary between grammar and lexis

## Mini-grammar

- planned or unplanned
- up the speaking practice element

*You should have come...you would have loved it*

*I guess I must have been about 14 or 15*

*I'm not bothered one way or the other*

# When was the first time you.....?

- spoke English to a native speaker
- went on holiday without your parents
- had a cigarette
- got drunk
- earned a day's pay
- spoke English over the phone
- went on a date
- drove a car
- spent a night away from your family
- kissed someone

## What are the odds.....?

- pass CAE with an A?
- get married in the next year?
- find a job when you go home?
- buy a house in the next couple of years?
- your country win the next world cup?
- Oscar arrive on time tomorrow?
- work abroad in the future?

# Real-life contexts for mini-grammar

- Second conditional for excuses
- Grammar not neat and tidy
- Naturalness the key
- Increases exposure to grammar rather than a linear syllabus

Do you fancy coming for a drink after class?

- I'd love to but I'm meeting my brother
- I'd love to, but I have to study tonight
- I'd love to, but I've arranged to have dinner with my ex-host family
- I'd love to, but I said I'd help Juan with his IELTS writing

Sorry....

If I wasn't meeting my brother, I'd come..

If I didn't have to study tonight, I'd come..

If I hadn't arranged to have dinner..I'd come

If I hadn't said I'd help Juan...I'd come...

No worries, let's do it another time...

Etc.....



What aspects of 'grammar'  
should we teach?

# Scott Thornbury:

“...EFL tends to produce speakers who speak like a book, because their English is modelled on an almost exclusively written version of the language.”

What are the main differences between spoken and written English?

Is there any grammar we tend to use more often in speaking than writing?

Is there any grammar in course books that you think isn't used much in speaking?

# 1. Some aspects of grammar are almost never used in conversation:

- Reporting verbs: *admit, deny, etc*
- Non-defining relative clauses
- *'My aunt, who hates cats, was given a kitten for Christmas'*
- Full questions;
- *'Would like to go for a drink tonight?'*
- Present Perfect Continuous – *0.1% of all tense use in spoken English*

## 2. Some grammar items are used far less frequently:

- Subjects

*'Love your new shoes'*

- Auxiliaries

- *'Ready yet?'*

- Formal question tags

- *'She's married, right?'*

## Key items of spoken grammar

- Ellipsis: *'Love your shoes'*
- Ellipsis in questions:  
*Any plans? Beer later? Nice weekend?*
- Relative Clauses to give your opinion:
  - *Abdullah got 6 in IELTS, which is unbelievable, because he's so slack*
- Reported speech: *He went.. I was like.. We talked about ....*

- 'Heads'
- *So, your new boyfriend, what's he like?*
- *Friday, what are we doing?*
- *This weather...god it's so awful*

- 'Tails'
- *It's really nice in summer, Portsmouth*
- *It's too late to get the last train, I reckon*
- *He's a brilliant singer, Jon*
- *The exam was awful, a nightmare*

Making statements into  
questions

*You spoke to your mum, then?*

*Steve's coming to the pub, too?*

*You're coming tonight, right?*

Rarely-taught structures

*Tend to*

*Supposed to*

*Had better*



## Interactive Grammar

### Using synonyms to keep the conversation going/agree

*They shouldn't keep us waiting so long, it's awful.*

*Yes, terrible.*

*I'm full, that was a great meal.*

*Yes, amazing, wasn't it?*

A few final  
thoughts...

# Get students to do the work

- Question Time – last 15 minutes (save them)
- Ask them to bring in grammar or vocab questions
- Write down language they read/hear/host family, and bring it in
- Challenge them: ‘What’s the difference between since, yet, for?’
- Test each other from notebooks

Topics?

PARSNIP?

What else?

# Drilling

- Absolutely
- Long chunks – make your more natural
- Students like it if you make it fun
- Different types of drilling
- Helps listening

**“What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean?”**

**bunch**

**pick up**

**odds**

**tip**

**How would you answer?**

*“Teaching English is pretty simple – you read something, or you listen to something, and then you talk about it, and take it from there...”*

(Paul Seligson)

Let's play a game to  
finish