

# Teaching Practice Handbook

A reference book for  
EFL teachers in training

*Roger Gower & Steve Walters*

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# Preface

**Teaching Practice** (TP) can be described as a situation in which a teacher in training teaches a group of students under supervision. The aim is usually to improve the trainee's teaching skills and develop his or her awareness of how students learn. (NB: Where the masculine pronoun is used for 'the teacher' and 'the student' it should be understood to include female teachers and students.)

TP can be set up in many ways. For example, the trainee may take over parts of a teacher's lessons or work with a group of volunteer students. The trainee may practise alone or share a class with other trainees. For a more detailed analysis of different structures see p 170–171.

**Teaching Practice Handbook** is not a course book; there is no need to read any one section before any of the others. It is a handbook and as such is intended to be dipped into.

One way of using it might be as follows. Before planning a TP session, decide which area you are going to concentrate on and read the appropriate section. Glance at it again before going into class. After the lesson, try to identify areas that need improvement and consult the end of the section to see if there are any exercises you can do alone or with your training group.

How the book is used in relation to a course will depend very much on the overall structure of the course and on individual TP supervisors. Because *Teaching Practice Handbook* is not a course book, a course can't be linked directly to it. *Teaching Practice Handbook* can only be supplementary, intended to increase awareness of the many complex aspects of TP and to help you make the most of it. *Teaching Practice Handbook* can also be used, rather like a car manual, to help you put things right when they go wrong.

**Teaching Practice Handbook** sets out:

- to provide some basic guidelines for TP and practical information to help you get the best out of it
- to clarify the reasoning behind many of the skills and techniques needed and to provide exercises to help and improve them.

The focus is not on the language and the language skills being taught but on the teaching skills and techniques required in situations where the teacher is required to direct or orchestrate the learning activities of a class, largely from 'up front'. There are other ways of organizing language learning, for example self-access systems, which are outside the scope of most TP situations and so outside the scope of this book.

The temptation of a book of this kind, where what is talked about is why certain things are done and how they can be done most effectively, is to sound as if there are no other ways of doing them. It should be said then that the rationale and practices stated here are the subject of constant discussion and revision in most teacher training establishments. Many classes and teachers have their ways of doing things which defy the rules of accepted wisdom and yet are hugely successful.

It ought to be said, too, that because the book focuses on the teacher it runs the risk of suggesting that the ELT classroom is more teacher-centred than it need be. You should reject any sections that you feel work against the best interests of the learners and a learner-centred classroom.

The principles which *Teaching Practice Handbook* is based on form the mainstream of EFL teaching at the present time. We do no attempt to deal directly with the changes of principle proposed by 'The Silent Way' and 'Community Language Learning' or Suggestopaedia, although it is clear in many ways they have an established place in EFL and have in fact had an influence on many of the ideas presented in this book. The techniques and procedures are those to be found on many initial training courses. There is no attempt to break new ground.

Although experienced EFL teachers should find *Teaching Practice Handbook* useful, it is assumed that while you might have some teaching experience you have had very little, if any, in EFL.

\* (See Stevick *Memory, Meaning and Method*, Newbury House)

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# 1 Approaching Teaching Practice

## 1.1 Introduction

### Why have teaching practice on a course?

You can learn a lot *about* teaching by discussing it and talking about materials and techniques but, like most skills, including using a language effectively, you can't really learn it without doing it. It is one thing to describe what you are going to do in a lesson, when you might be allowed to talk without interruption; it is quite another to carry it out when it includes a group of people who expect to contribute to the lesson and perhaps influence its progress. Before going into a school where your students expect you to be able to do your job, there are obviously huge benefits in being able to try things out beforehand in a supportive atmosphere, such as TP frequently provides. Admittedly in some TP situations, particularly if you are a native speaker, the students' expectations could be unrealistically high and might make such an atmosphere difficult to create.

### What does TP practise?

It normally focuses on four areas:

- 1 classroom sensitivity to problems of language use
- 2 classroom sensitivity to learning problems
- 3 basic classroom management skills
- 4 teaching techniques

### What are the objectives of TP?

Depending on the overall aims of the particular course and the stage that TP has reached, its objectives would normally be one or more of the following, listed in random order:

- to provide you with an opportunity to try out techniques
- to create a situation of gradually increasing freedom within which you can progress from simple to more complex teaching
- to provide you with an opportunity to have your teaching evaluated and constructively criticized
- to encourage in you some criteria for self-evaluation
- to help you develop your own teaching style
- to provide you with exposure to real learners, their learning problems and the affective factors which influence their learning
- to allow you to simulate or approach the real teaching situation under sympathetic supervision
- to develop in you an awareness of how the language is needed by foreign learners

- to create in you a sense of responsibility for your students
- to expose you to a range of levels and to develop an understanding of the differences of approach required.

Of course, TP should also provide genuine learning for the students involved.

### How is progress judged?

Sensitivity won't really come until you've had experience and learned to relax with your students. As the basic classroom skills are mastered and different parts of a lesson are handled more confidently you should be able to stand back mentally and observe the lesson as it is going on, see what the students are doing well, what they are having problems with as well as how they are interacting as a group.

To help yourself, it's well worth getting to know the students well, both inside and outside the classroom, not only to find out about their interests but also to give them the opportunity of expressing what *they* feel their problems are with the language. They can also provide other useful feedback on your classes, both what they found useful and what they didn't, as well as how the group feel about each other.

Other trainees (if they are available) and supervisors can also help develop your awareness. They can sit back and observe what's going on, unhindered by the nerves and anxieties of the teacher, so it's well worth getting their views.

The skills and techniques have to be learned, practised and developed. Some are obvious, some will come instinctively, others you will have to be told about or see someone doing first.

A distinct improvement in classroom management skills should be seen throughout a training course. The most significant change comes when familiarity with the classroom and increased confidence allow for clear, directive control of the learning environment.

The same applies to teaching techniques to some extent. However, since different techniques are used with different types of lesson they often don't recur enough for measurable improvement in the skill of handling them to be noticed – a lot depends on the length of course you have and the opportunities for pre-lesson practice and post-lesson practice. Besides, although we can sometimes say 'This is what we want to achieve and this is the generally-agreed best way of doing it', teaching is a personal skill and in a lot of areas individual teachers have to work out the best way of achieving a particular aim for themselves. This means taking the first step towards developing a teaching style, something a TP situation is not always suitable for.

### How is it decided what to do on TP?

Supervisors or tutors usually give a lot of support and help initially, both with actual teaching points and with techniques and materials to use. This support is often gradually withdrawn as ability increases in identifying the student language needs and in preparing materials to satisfy them.

The aim of a session should also initially be identified for you. Some supervisors like to give out beforehand a timetable or a syllabus of what you are to teach. This should ideally reflect both your needs and the students' needs.

### Shouldn't TP be based around the needs of the trainees?

In some ways this is so and most courses ensure that a wide range of teaching



skills are worked at. But the most effective way of meeting those needs is by making TP reflect the real situation as closely as possible; this can only mean basing it on what the students need to learn.

### **How can particular skills and techniques be practised?**

At the end of many of the following chapters there are a number of exercises. They don't form a complete programme and no doubt you will be able to think of others. Some are intended simply to provoke discussion, others are of the 'get-up-and-do-it' type and involve peer teaching. These give practice of something without having to waste the time of real students for whom the exercise would have no point. It's worth discussing the purpose of each exercise and how it is going to be approached with supervisors and other trainees.

### **Does this mean that things have to be got right before going into TP?**

No. TP is a time for experiment. It is one of the few opportunities you will ever have for trying out a new idea and perhaps having a critical but supportive set of observers. You also have real students who can make the most sensitive, well-prepared lessons turn out badly. What is good for one group is not always good for another.

When anything is tried out mistakes are made. Often, more can be learned from the lessons that don't go so well than from the great successes.

### **What should be looked for as an end result?**

After TP you should:

- be more aware of the language you are teaching
- be more aware of the factors that aid and impede learning in the classroom
- be more sensitive to the students' emotions, thoughts and attitudes as they affect their learning
- have some awareness of what is needed for the development of language skills
- be in control of some basic classroom management skills
- be able to plan a series of lessons, perhaps based around published materials, which are relevant to what the students need to learn
- be able to present and create situations for the practice of new language
- have some basic skills and techniques for the practice of language, in controlled and less controlled ways
- be able to set up interaction activities
- have some control over exercises that develop language skills
- be able to identify your own areas of weakness in the teaching situation
- think critically and creatively about your own lessons.

## **1.2 Getting the best out of TP**

### **Co-operating with other teachers working in the institution**

Other teachers can be a great help. For example, some may be prepared to give



guidance as to what materials to use, others may tell you what you want to know about particular students. They can also give you a good picture of what teaching is actually like.

However, they are likely to be busy and preoccupied with their classes and shouldn't be pestered unnecessarily. They are also likely to have a greater territorial feeling about the place, so:

- clean the board when you finish
- return borrowed tapes and books
- start and finish your lessons on time
- make sure you know how to use the machinery; don't break it!

Remember: if they are teaching the same students as you, they can make a big difference to how those students think of you.

It's also worth remembering that both teachers and students have expectations as to personal appearance. In many institutions a certain informality is acceptable, but lack of cleanliness and tidiness isn't.

### Working with a supervisor

In most institutions the supervisor's role is:

- to help with lesson preparation
- to observe critically
- to give helpful feedback.

However, it's vital that you are not over-dependent on your supervisor. Certainly, ask for clarification of any point you are supposed to be teaching – you can't say to a group of confused students that you don't understand what you are supposed to be doing – even ask for your lesson plan to be checked, provided there's enough time for changes to be made, but your attitude is all-important. It shouldn't be *I don't know how to do it but I didn't really know how to do it but I thought this might work. What do you think?* You should always be moving positively towards independence and get close to the real-life situation when you will be working in a school without help.

Don't blame the supervisor if things go wrong; you're the one with responsibility for the class while you are teaching it.

Respond positively to criticisms; give your reasons for doing something; try not to be defensive. Remember: the supervisor is in a better position to see the reactions of the class than you are.

### Working with other trainees

Other trainees are an extremely useful resource. They can give ideas and information about language, materials and about students. But they'll be less inclined to give unless *you* are willing to give. Offer help, and spare time to socialize. Remember: TP may be the only opportunity you'll ever have to talk about real students and real classes in any depth with other people.

Offering criticism, too, is helpful but it needs to be done with tact. *Why on earth didn't you show everyone the picture?* is likely to provoke a defensive reaction and will not help future relationships, whereas *I don't think everyone could see it* is likely to lead to a more fruitful exchange. Remember: being aware of the effect

language can have and being able to offer non-detering criticism are part of your job as a teacher.

'Peer teaching' involves one of you teaching the others who are either pretending to be students or just being themselves. It is particularly useful for the isolation and practice of classroom techniques and many exercises are suggested in this book. It's often worth spending time discussing this approach with your peers. It can be a waste of time if everyone collapses with laughter every time they pretend to be a student. (For further reading see section on Microteaching pp 53–65 in *Teacher Training*, ed. Holden, MEP Publications)

### Your own attitude

We can't change our personalities but we can alter the impression we give in a class

- by smiling; that doesn't mean you have to walk around with a fixed grin, but showing a friendly attitude warms the students to *you*.
- by responding to what students say as communication; don't treat every utterance as a model to be corrected or congratulated upon!
- by taking time, by showing an interest in both the learning *and* the personal problems of the students.

### Preparation

Preparation doesn't mean scripting the lesson – that can't be done and shouldn't be attempted except possibly as an exercise to help you reduce the amount you talk during a lesson. It means working out *what* you want to do, *why* you want to do it and *how* you're going to do it. It means thinking through the stages of the lesson, trying to link them, working out what the point of each stage is and jotting down enough notes to help you remember what you thought of.

#### Overpreparation

This usually means

- getting stuck in your plan and not responding flexibly to the class
- getting obsessed by your own ideas and techniques
- insensitivity to the students, what they're doing and not doing.

#### Underpreparation

This means

- long silences while you decide what to do next (demoralizing for you *and* the students!)
- unclear aims and poor presentation
- underexploited activities.

If the material you have prepared turns out to be unsuitable, then don't be frightened to abandon it if you can think of something better. Be sure, though, that you're actually teaching something and not just filling in the time.

Keep lesson plans simple (see Unit 4.1). They need to be something you can work from in the classroom, to remind you of the stages of the lesson. Cut out prose descriptions, number sections clearly and underline language models. Use coloured pens to draw boxes and circles around important elements.

### The class itself

If the students are happy and learning – the two don't always go together – then you can be reasonably sure your classes are going well. Good preparation should ensure good learning so try and free yourself of anxieties and enjoy their company as a group. Always try and put yourself in their position, remembering their very often clear needs, their time limitations and their different approaches to learning. Find out about them. Get to know them. Make good use of breaks. Show that you're enjoying teaching them as you're teaching them.

Remember: if your nose is buried in your lesson plan throughout the lesson, or you fumble with scribbled notes, you are reducing your chances of relating to them or directing their learning effectively.

### Feedback

This is normally given soon after you've finished teaching – even if sometimes you can't face reliving it all again! It is usually oral, although many supervisors like to give out a carbon copy of their written notes.

The trainees who improve most quickly are those that recognize their strengths and weaknesses, through the help of the supervisor and other trainees, and respond by asking *What can I do to correct the problem?* From time to time you might like to do a critique of one of your lessons. If you need a checklist, try using the contents page of this book.

It's easy to get demoralized when you don't see any improvement. This is often because:

- the students' needs are rightly being considered first
- you are trying out new ideas, totally unpractised
- you are not able to demonstrate what you *can* do
- you don't get the chance to have another go at something you messed up.

But your supervisors are aware of these sorts of problems and will provide support. They're aware of how little you have actually taught! The fact that you survive without passing out or running out of the classroom in terror should be a source of constant congratulation! After each lesson, it's worth noting the skills you have used and referring back to previous criticisms. It's often surprising how much you are doing for the first time. In fact, if you've shown yourself to be good at some particular strategy it's often worth *avoiding* it on TP, to give yourself practice over a wide range of skills. Don't worry about always showing your good sides. Think of TP as PRACTICE.

### TP files

It is well worth keeping a TP file, even on courses where the tutor doesn't require one to be handed in at the end. It should include lesson plans, reflections on your own teaching, copies of supervisor's comments, examples of materials and visual aids used, students' written work and sources of ideas when you are actually teaching.

### TP diaries

You might also find it valuable to keep a personal diary of TP in which you reflect on your successes and failures. Having to articulate an experience helps not only to get it in perspective but to develop better self-awareness generally as a teacher. As it is essentially of private value you may or may not decide to show it to others.

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# 2 The Teacher

## Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, it is not true that you have to be an extrovert to be a good language teacher. Some good teachers are very low-key in the classroom, while other teachers, both lively and amusing, survive only as entertainers. Although some teachers develop a special classroom manner, in the main your style of teaching will depend on the sort of person you are.

However, while personality is impossible to prescribe, for a class to learn effectively you must know how to be firm and directive when necessary as well as unobtrusive when the students need to be left alone. In other words, you need to subtly alter your role according to the activity without going to the extremes of dominating a class or leaving it without anything to do.

In this chapter, the aim is to discuss this and other general aspects of manner.

## 2.1 Eye contact

We all know how difficult it is to talk to someone who never looks at us or someone who looks us in the eye *all* the time. Similarly we know how important eye contact is in signalling such messages as *I want to speak to you* or *I'm addressing this remark to you*. Now turn to the classroom. Observe, for example, how, when and why your tutor makes eye contact with you and your colleagues. The main uses of eye contact in the language classroom are:

- to help establish rapport. A teacher who never looks students in the eye seems to lack confidence and gives the students a sense of insecurity. On the other hand, having a fixed glare doesn't help either!
- to indicate to a student that you want to talk to him or you want him to do something. (Don't overdo it, though, he might feel persecuted!)
- to hold the attention of students not being addressed and encouraging them to listen to those doing the talking. (Be careful, though. Looking at one student too long will make the others feel excluded.)
- to take the place of naming students, for example when conducting a fast drill.
- to show a student who is talking that the teacher is taking notice.

More importantly, though, a teacher needs to look at the students to notice their reactions. Do they understand? Are they enjoying the lesson? Are they tired? Are they bored? Would it be a good idea to change the direction of the lesson? Does anyone want to contribute or ask questions?

How will eye contact vary at different stages of a lesson?

### 1 Presentation of new language

Use eye contact:

- to check that everyone is concentrating. When presenting new language, particularly at elementary levels, the teacher is often very much 'up front', directing, eliciting, giving models and conducting.

- to maintain attention. This means a constant moving of the eyes so that no student is left out. Since you need to keep the class together, be careful not to neglect the students closest to you.
- to keep in touch with other students when you are dealing with an individual, perhaps correcting him. Your eyes can say to them: *You're involved in this too.*
- to encourage contributions when you are trying to elicit ideas or specific language from the students. Frequently, you only know students have something to say by looking at them.
- to check that the students understand. Puzzled expressions quickly tell you you need to try again!

## **2 Controlled practice**

Use eye contact:

- to indicate who is to speak. Using names can slow a drill down and pointing might be offensive.
- together with a gesture such as a shake of the head, to indicate that something's incorrect.
- to ensure that the students have understood what they're supposed to do and know what is going on.

## **3 Pair or group work**

During any activity that doesn't demand teacher-centred control, avoid eye contact, unless you are specifically asked for help or choose to join in. As soon as you establish eye contact, or the students establish eye contact with you, you are brought into the activity, thus making it teacher-centred. However, you can use eye contact:

- to signal to a pair or group to start, to stop or to hurry up. It can be far less dominating than the voice.
- to indicate, with an accompanying gesture, that groups are on the right or wrong lines.

### **Is there any point in encouraging the students to look at each other?**

Yes. Very much so. Confidence is gained and shyness lost through eye contact. In addition, a student who has difficulty understanding is more likely to understand if his eyes are on the speaker's face than if they are on the ground. So, when students ask each other questions, or help and correct each other, whether in pair work or student to student across the class, they should look at each other. It might be better to get them to move their chairs to make it easier.

## **Exercises**

### **Ex. 1**

#### **AIM**

To learn to pace a lesson by looking at individuals in the class.

#### **PROCEDURE**

- 1 Stand at the front of the group so that you can see everybody.
- 2 Dictate a short passage to the group, judging when to start each phrase by looking at everyone's hands. The aim is not to leave anyone behind.

**COMMENT**

Get the views of the group at the end, particularly the slowest writer, as to how effective you were.

**Ex. 2****AIM**

To encourage full eye contact and to practise spreading attention randomly round the class.

**PROCEDURE**

- 1 Call out the names of members of the group.
- 2 Make eye contact with each person as their name is called.

**COMMENT**

- 1 This exercise needs to be brief and rapid to make the point. It's probably better to make out a random list of names beforehand rather than try to do it off the top of the head. The exercise can be a useful aid to name-learning!
- 2 If you know the names well and it's a reasonable-sized group, try it without a list. Aim to cover everyone in the group once only in random order. Ask the group if they were all called and where you tended to focus your attention.
- 3 A later variation might be for the group to be less willing to make eye contact. This should show you that your position as teacher is quite strong and that a student resisting eye-contact can feel quite uncomfortable.

**Ex. 3****AIM**

To encourage evenly spread but random eye contact and to practise using eye contact in place of students' names.

**PROCEDURE**

- 1 Write a simple substitution drill.
- 2 In random order, drill the group using eye-contact instead of names. Make sure you include everyone.
- 3 Ask each member how many times he was called on.

**COMMENT**

- 1 An exercise with applications outside the problem area of eye contact and one which can usefully be repeated. A simple variation would be to use a facial expression to indicate that a second repetition is required.
- 2 You might find there are reasons deep-rooted in your personality if you are reluctant to make eye contact. Though it may be difficult, you will need to try and overcome these if you are to have effective control over a class.

**Ex. 4****AIM**

To provide the basis for a discussion on what eye contact can tell you.

**PROCEDURE**

- 1 Find a partner.

- 2 Give your partner the following card:

A: Talk to your partner for three minutes about your family. Your partner will take notes.

- 3 Note down the amount of eye contact your partner makes and what he is saying when he makes it. He should not be aware of your real aim. Make sure you ask some questions and comment on what your partner says. Don't let it be a monologue.

### COMMENT

- 1 If this activity is controlled by a supervisor, the other partner will want the following card:

B: Your partner is going to talk to you about his family. He thinks you are going to take notes. What you are really interested in is the amount of eye contact your partner makes and what he is saying when he makes it. Make sure you ask some questions and comment on what your partner says. Don't let it be a monologue.

- 2 The exercise is best done without prior explanation since once eye contact has been mentioned everyone becomes very self-conscious. Therefore it can only really be done once.
- 3 The kind of things to follow up in discussion are:
- how far eye contact influences the conversation
  - the role of eye contact in starting or finishing an exchange
  - what happens when questions are asked and answered
  - how what has been discovered affects the classroom.

## 2.2 Use of gesture and facial expression

Gestures and facial expressions are an integral part of any communication where people listen and speak to each other. They help us get across what we want to say. For example, when we give directions in the street to a stranger, we not only use our voice to give special emphasis to the important points, we often use our hands to make things clear as well.

If we are deprived of what the body can express, for example when we talk on the telephone or listen to the radio, we are forced to use our imaginations and try and extract all the meaning from the inflexions of the voice or the words themselves. With direct contact we often look at the other person's face to gauge what their real feelings or attitudes are.

### How does gesture affect what we do in the classroom?

- The English and other English-speakers use gesture differently from, say, the Italians. It is a part of the language and it needs to be understood. Teach it if necessary.
- At the same time, if we are in a country where we don't speak the language, gesture will help us to get the gist of what is going on. Equally, students, particularly elementary students, are dependent on the gestures we use. So use gestures carefully and clearly.



- We should always be aware how difficult it is, even when it stimulates the imagination, for students to listen to audio-tapes.
- Gesture is one way for you to convey the meaning of language.
- You can use gestural signals to manage the class, but they need to be clear and unambiguous if they are to reduce the amount you talk.

### 1 Conveying meaning

- If a student doesn't understand the word *tall* the appropriate hand gesture to help get the meaning across is easy to make, although frequently mime is less ambiguous. (You *can* indicate the meaning of the word *stagger* by hand gesture but it is probably preferable to stagger!)
- If you are presenting a dialogue, it is well worth adding physical expression to bring it to life.

In the early days it is often better to exaggerate your gestures a little because:

- they need to be a conscious part of your repertoire, deliberately doing what they set out to do
- the students need to understand them. If they are exaggerated they are usually less ambiguous
- many teachers are more frozen than they think they are and move little more than their lips!

Excessive exaggeration, though, can be silly and counter-productive. It mustn't be at the expense of the language you are teaching.

We can also teach the students to understand special gestures, to help us convey meaning or highlight aspects of the form of the language, e.g.:

PAST TIME – hitch-hiking gesture over the shoulder

PRESENT TIME – pointing to the floor by the feet

FUTURE TIME – pointing into the distance in front

INTONATION – indicated by making wave motions with the hand

STRESS – indicated by beating with the hand.

(The students, however, need to learn what these gestures mean and you need to know they understand. Pointing to the floor could mean 'here' and pointing in front of you could mean 'over there'. So teach them and check that the students understand them.)

### 2 Managing the class

Every language teacher develops a personal set of gestures to get a class to do what he wants with the minimum of fuss and the minimum of language. There are some, however, which are fairly standard, e.g.:

Listen – hand cupped behind the ear

Repeat in chorus – firm sweep of the arm, or similar gesture to get everyone starting together

Repeat individually – beckoning gesture with the whole hand

Get into pairs – arm, hand or finger movement to show you are 'joining' the students

Stop (pair work, group work, noise!) – raise hands or clap

Contract words/join sentences – link index fingers

Give a complete sentence – hands held apart horizontally, as though holding a brick at either end

Say from the beginning – rotate index fingers round each other backwards

Good – thumbs up

Not right – shake head or index finger

Break the sentence down into words/ – use each finger of the hand(s) to represent a word/phoneme

A voiced sound – point to the throat.

Some of these expressions can be conveyed by the face, e.g:

Good – show a pleased expression

Not right – screw up the face

Other useful facial expressions are:

Interesting idea – raise the eyebrows

Not quite right, I think – make a doubtful expression

Repeat individually – nod in the direction of the student and raise the eyebrows.

### Is there anything to be avoided?

Yes. Quite a lot:

- Unclear, ambiguous expressions and gestures
- Gestures which are not obvious and which you haven't taught or checked with the class
- Gestures which are rude or obscene to the students. Common ones with some nationalities are: pointing, using the middle finger, showing the sole of the foot or shoe, holding up the index and small finger of the same hand. Remember the English have a two-fingered gesture! If you are unfamiliar with the culture of your students, it's worth discussing different gestures with them to find out what to be wary of. (If you're English and teaching out of England it's absolutely essential: students are less likely to suspend their own expectations than if they are in England. On the other hand, don't worry about them to the extent that every move you make is fraught with terror! If in doubt just stick to the one basic rule; never touch your students on anywhere but the arm – although even that might be taboo in some countries!)
- Irritating habits, such as grinning or blinking too much. They can be very off-putting; even language 'ticks' such as *OK* or *all right?* can annoy students. If you don't believe it when somebody says you are repeatedly stroking your face or pulling your hair, try to watch yourself on video if you can. Failing that try and get other trainees to note down your habits and the number of times you practise them. Getting rid of a habit can paralyse you with self-consciousness but it's worth it in the long run!