

Stressing the right skills in designing pronunciation courses

Handout 2: Pronunciation Activities Grouped by Multiple Intelligence

Bodily/Kinesthetic

Ball toss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students say a word or phrase as they toss a ball to a classmate across the room. They should match the falling arch of the ball with the falling intonation pattern and lengthened vowel. Example: hippopoooooooootamus / He plays the guitaaaaaaaa. Throw the ball as you begin the word. Hold the stressed vowel until the other student catches the ball. • Do the same as above but have the student hold a fricative sound until the other student catches the ball. 
Rubber band activities	<p>Give each student a rubber band. Have them stretch it to highlight word stress or vowel lengthening. Rubber bands can also be used to lengthen final -s. </p>
Knee bending/ Body language/ Clapping	<p>Have students bend their knees to show intonation, clap for word or sentence stress, or march across the classroom. Match any body movement with a suprasegmental feature. </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intonation lines—Groups of students make intonation and/or stress patterns, kneeling for falling intonation, raising on toes for rising intonation • Linking lines—Give students word or sound cards and have them link arms to represent linked or blended sounds as they create sentences
Balloon squealing	<p>It may seem simple, but for students who have trouble understanding the concepts of voiced and voiceless sounds, showing them the difference with a balloon is surprisingly helpful. Just blow up the balloon and let the air out slowly, so that it squeals. </p>
Feather/tissue puffing	<p>Use feathers or tissues to show aspirated sounds. The students can see the puff of air (or lack of it) until they learn to hear it. </p>
Use pencils or hard candies	<p>Many students find that holding a candy or pencil in their mouth helps them make the l/r distinction. (For sanitary reasons, straws work well.) If they hold the pencil on top of their tongue, they can't make an /l/, only an /r/.</p>

Logical/Mathematical



<p>Categorization activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the students cards with single-syllable words on them. Have them put the cards in groups based on the vowel sound. Can be done singly or in small groups. • Give students cards with polysyllabic words and have them categorize them according to stress pattern. (Works well as an icebreaker/grouping activity.) • Have students match intonation patterns with sentences. • Have students match stress patterns with words. Draw different stress patterns (i.e. xxXx) on one set of cards and give one each to half of the class. Give cards with the corresponding words (i.e. information) to the other half of the class. Have all of the students start sounding out their words or stress patterns and walk around until they find their partner. 
<p>Analogies</p>	<p>Make analogies between a pronunciation point and a "real-world" situation. Shirley likes to compare pronunciation class to basketball practice. You have a few rules to learn, but most of the improvement is practice, practice, practice. Karen likes to use the analogy of learning to juggle.</p>
<p>Language analysis</p>	<p>Ask students to discover pronunciation rules themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to authentic language to determine rules for sentence stress. • Listen to interviews to determine rules for intonation.



Intrapersonal

<p>Self-monitoring</p>	<p>Have students take responsibility for their own learning and improvement by keeping a pronunciation portfolio, responding to tapes or videos of their speech, and keeping detailed records and goal-setting contracts.</p>
<p>Reaction & Reflection</p>	<p>Combined with the self-monitoring, reaction & reflection make the backbone of a successful pronunciation portfolio, which the students can develop over the course of the semester.</p>

Interpersonal 

<p>Games</p>	<p>Make a pack of picture cards that feature minimal pairs. Make four cards (blue, green, yellow, and red) for each word. </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go Fish--play it like the traditional game. Students must both hear and say words accurately. (Do you have any bears?) The level of difficulty can be raised by requiring students to collect cards one at a time by color. (Do you have the red bear?) • Pronunciation Pyramids—Students race to come up with words with 1, 2, 3, or more syllables within a certain category. Can be done singly or in pairs. • Dominoes—Make “dominoes” out of index cards with different stress patterns or vowel sounds and have the students match them. The first student to play all their dominoes wins. • Contrasts--Put students in small groups and choose one in each group to be the dealer. The dealer places one card face up in front of a player. The player must say, with correct focus stress, what the card is. Use regular stress rules for new information and focus stress to show contrasts. If the player gets it right, they keep the card. Keep going counterclockwise until all cards are gone. At the end, count the cards. The student with the most is the dealer for the next round. Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a red bear. (new information--no relation to previous card) • This is a BLUE bear. (color contrast only) • This is a blue PEAR. (object contrast only) <p>(Note: If you're running short on prep time, this can be played with a reduced deck of Uno, Rook, or even regular playing cards.)</p>
<p>Hot Seat Peer Review</p>	<p>Have the class get in a circle and pair off. Label students "A" and "B," alternating. Give each of the "B" students a different pronunciation feature to listen for. Have the "A" students give a prepared mini-presentation (30 seconds-1 minute) to the "B" students. At the end of the minute, all of the "A" students stand and move clockwise to the next "B" and start again. Repeat 2 times. At the end of the exercise, the "A" students will have feedback from three separate peers.</p>
<p>Plays</p>	<p>Have pairs of students perform single scenes or dialogues; have groups perform single acts or even a whole play. Students can mark the scripts for sentence stress, intonation, etc. before practicing. Alternately, students can write their own plays. Videotape for self- and peer-review activities.</p>

Musical

<p>Use musical notation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use quarter notes and eighth notes to get across the concept of word stress and reductions  • Use notation to show pitch/intonation change in sentences or play a pattern on a child's xylophone ("My Fair Lady" has a humorous example of this that the students love.)
<p>Hum/use kazoo's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do a sentence/intonation pattern matching activity in pairs. Have one student hum the intonation pattern, and the other picks out the sentence that matches. (Sentences should have an equal number of syllables. The only difference should be in intonation.)  • Have students have humming "conversations." See how much meaning they can convey to each other using only intonation. They'll be surprised! Or, give one student a list of questions to ask, and the other can hum the answers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: Do you want to go to the movies? • B: (humming) indicate answer (i.e. assent, decline, maybe, astonishment, not understanding, etc.)
<p>Sing or listen to songs</p>	<p>Songs can be used for a variety of purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking and blending • Reductions • Word and sentence stress

Visual/Spatial

<p>Use lots of wall charts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make charts with the basics of pronunciation (rules for word and sentence stress, intonation patterns, consonant and vowel charts, common reductions, examples of linking and blending). Post them at each class. Can also post poems with stress, intonation and linking marked. • Use color vowel chart
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Lip reading activities	<p>The teacher can model this in front of the class and then let students work in pairs. </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mouth (don't speak) words to practice vowels, having students watch lip and jaw position • Mouth words to practice minimal pairs with certain consonants (l/r, th/s, f/p)
Use Mirrors	This old standby is great for visual learners.
Multimedia/ pronunciation software	<p>Many pronunciation programs allow students to record themselves and see graphs showing stress and intonation. If you can't afford one of these, try the sound recorder on your computer. With a little practice, you can get it to show word stress and reductions.</p> <p>There are a number of free websites that provide excellent pronunciation resources. Some have video clips. See handout of useful links.</p>
Card Games	See Games under "Interpersonal"
Color-coded Feedback	<p>The student records herself reading a short passage. When she submits her tape, make sure you get a copy of the text. On the copy, use one highlighter (e.g. yellow) to indicate word stress problems, another highlighter (e.g. orange) to indicate sentence stress errors, and a fine-point colored pen (e.g. green) to indicate segmental errors. At the end of the student's recording, you can tape your feedback—the color-coded comments will help you organize your feedback into skill areas (e.g. segmentals, then word stress), and it will help your student see what types of errors she makes most frequently.</p>
Use videos	"My Fair Lady" is a wonderful icebreaker. Use the section where Liza is learning pronunciation.

Naturalistic

Nature Poetry	<p>Use poetry which invokes natural images to stimulate the naturalist intelligence. Examples: "Who has seen the wind?" by Christina Georgina Rossetti, "Hold Fast to Dreams" by Langston Hughes.</p>
Word Stress or Syllable Scavenger Hunt	<p>Put students in groups and send them outside for a specified period of time. Tell them to find as many things in nature with 1,2,3,4 or more syllables or with certain word stress patterns as they can.  (Example: tree, squirrel, waterfall, etc.)</p>