Welcome to this session on ISE examinations.

We will be looking at the structure and components of the exams and having a conversation about different approaches to reading and writing to help our students be effective in their exams and school work

After the session please go to:

www.bestinpractice.weebly.com

where you can download a full set of notes under the section: **ISE I and ISE II Andalucia.**

1. **How is the skill of speaking different to writing?**
   Speaking and writing are quite different beasts. What at aspects of speaking and writing can we draw our students' attention to so that they fully understand there are major differences.

2. **Raising Awareness**

Before simply handing out advice to your students it is important **to get 'buy-in'** from them. If they accept your advice and values of good practice, they are more likely to apply them to their own work and achieve better results.

We will look at a simple, fun exercise which can be done in Spanish if you like, to make the differences clear.

Once you have made your students aware of the basic differences between spoken and written language, ask them to review some previous writing.
1/ does it sound more like speech than writing?
2/ can you spot any words which should not be there?
3/ can you spot any sentences which are not grammatically correct?
4/ is there repetition of the same language?
5/ are linking words very informal and could be improved with forms more appropriate for writing?

Focus your students' attention in particular on:
1/ the formality of the language they have used in their written work
2/ take a look at punctuation and make corrections
2/ talk to them about the importance of proof reading as a means of avoiding the problems we have looked at above.

3. Plagiarism in the Portfolio tasks.

Test out these ideas with your students and discuss in your groups how to handle these points:

1/ I can simply take somebody's original ideas and words and use them as mine without reference
2/ I need to include a reference to ideas that are commonly known or accepted
3/ I can take my friends' work and adapt it and present it as mine
4/ It is easy to copy and paste from the internet into my answers and I don't need to say where I got the words from
5/ It's ok to ask my brother or another family member to read through my portfolio or homework exercises and let them correct my work for me because their English is better. If necessary I will pay them for doing it
6/ Talk about the distinction between 'searching' and 'researching' using the internet or other reference sources.

4. Approaches to reading.
- Ask students about what types of reading they do in Spanish
- Write different categories of written material on board. *i.e. magazines, novels, train and bus timetables, newspapers, blogs, websites, advertising etc.*

Have students think about and describe how they go about reading each kind of material.

Present your students with these scenarios and see if they approach reading them differently. There is often not a single correct answer, because it will vary according to your reading purpose.

- The TV guide for Friday evening
- An English grammar book
- An article in *National Geographic* magazine about Mexico
- A celebrity sportsman's homepage on the web
- The weather report in your local newspaper
- A novel
- A poem
- A bus timetable

- A fax at the office or at school
- An advertising email - so called "spam"
- An email or letter from a good friend
- A recipe

Types of reading.
Your students do not need to know the names of the types of reading but it is useful if you, the tutor, do: So please add a description of the types

- Skimming -
- Scanning -
- Extensive -
- Intensive reading -

Active reading techniques
It is a waste of time, particularly in an exam, to read without any specific purpose. The exam or task question in this case gives you the purpose:

With your colleagues here in the room, discuss how you can encourage your students to use the following active approaches to reading.

1. Underlining and highlighting

2. Note key words

3. Questions

4. Summarising

5. Signposting

6. Words, phrases and vocabulary

If your students adopt some sort of strategy such as that suggested above, reading will be more effective and speedier than reading with no particular purpose in mind.

5. Planning your time for completing your portfolio tasks.
The temptation is to leave most of the PF tasks until a short time before the exam.
1/ why is this obviously a bad idea?
2/ ask your students at what time of the day do they feel **most effective and productive**? What advice can you give them about getting homework and PF work done?

6. Brainstorming and Planning answers.
These two activities can make a huge difference to the quality of the answer for the PF and in the controlled written exam.

Check with your students how they feel about these statements:

How do your address their problems and concerns about these points?

1/ There is no point planning an answer. It is better to start writing and see where it goes.
2/ Planning takes up valuable writing time. After all, it is the final piece of work that will be assessed, not the plan
3/ I have no idea how to plan so I avoid doing it.

Help with brainstorming

1.What is brainstorming?

2.How do you help them with brainstorming?

3.Do you go for quality or quantity of ideas?

4.What graphic organisers could you use?

4. How do you bring all the ideas together, edit and make sense of them?

Starting to write:
Making a start is often the most difficult part. How can the following ideas help your students to start and progress through their compositions?

1/ a **topic sentence** – what is it, what is the function?
2/ refer to the question several times during your writing – why?

3/ include counter arguments to the points you make, or examples -
4/ conclusions and summaries – what should and shouldn't be there?

7. Paragraphing
Many students don't bother with paragraphs or their paragraph breaks are random. Do you students adopt any of these approaches?

1/ I start a new paragraph when it gets too long

2/ When I start a new reason, idea, argument, present a new piece of information
3/ I have no real strategy, I just guess when it is time to start a new one.

How do you explain the need and conventions of paragraphing to your students?

Tips - what tips can you give them about the following:

1/ each paragraph has a **topic sentence - restate its function?**

 2/ **linking language** - What is it? Why is it necessary?

3/ **coherence -** what do we mean by this and how to achieve it?

Quick check on your paragraphs

What could the problems be with paragraphs if you or your students discover that a paragraph(s) is:
1/ too long?

 2/ too short?

3/ my ideas don't link together?

 4/ my summary paragraph doesn't seem to relate to the **topic sentence** of the paragraph and the overall subject of the composition

5/ your conclusion should relate to or refer back to your introduction without repeating what you said in the introduction. Remember your introduction introduces your theme(s) and sets them out clearly for analysis, whereas your conclusion summarises and answers the questions.

8. Register or levels of formality
1. What determines the level or degree of formality/informality of writing?
2. How would, for example, an email to a close friend sound very different from a letter of complaint or enquiry to someone in the local Authority?

In the **Portfolio Tasks** and **the Controlled Written Exam** the task question will always **define the audience** for your writing.

At higher levels of ISE where, for example, data is presented and requires interpretation by the writer, a greater level of formality and detachment is appropriate.

For example, ' this table shows that....' And not: 'You can see from the table that....'
1. What other examples can you think of?

Contractions are generally not used. 'It is...' Not 'It's.....'
Slang words should be avoided. Often the Latinate verb is preferable to a verb+ preposition.

What exercises could you give your students to make them aware of and eliminate over-informal language in a formal context?

9. What makes a good sentence?
Find out what your students' opinion is about 'a good sentence' and what do you think?

1/. Is it as long as I can make it?
2/ long enough to do the job?
3/ ideally around 20 words
4/ no less than 10 words?
5/ What is the minimum requirement for a sentence to be a sentence?

In English what are the basic 'rules' regarding:
1/ word order - verb, object, subject
2/ position of adjectives
3/ position of prepositions.
4/ position of adverbs

How would you explain the following to your students:
1/ a compound sentence
2/ a complex sentence

What effect do the following have on the reader?
1/ using too many short sentences
2/ sentences which are over long
3/ unrelated sentences joined perhaps with a comma or semi colon

10. How to write better paragraphs.

1/ What do we mean by **COHERENCE** in a paragraph?

2/ Suggest ways your students can help each other with checking for coherence?

3/ What features of a paragraph help coherence?

What **linking words** do your students know and actively use to make their writing flow more smoothly?
Here are a few examples. What others can you usefully teach?

In no particular order:
- in conclusion, to begin with, to sum up ....

11. Cause and Effect

Many tasks require students to look at cause and effect. Many students focus on the 'what' and 'where' but ignore the 'how' and 'why'. Conjunctions are frequently used to express the cause and effect relationship.
- because, as a result of,

1/What other conjunctions are there?

Another way of expressing **cause and effect** is through verb phrases:
- X leads to Y, A results in B, Xs are the cause of Y
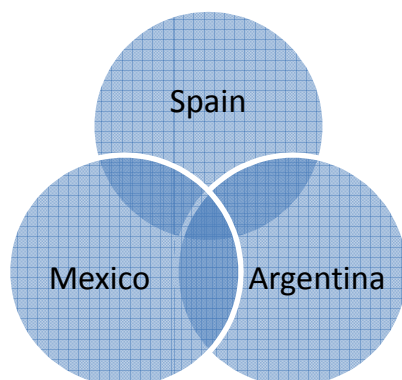
2/ Can you think of others?

Conditionals are useful to **predict and express wishes or regrets** for the future and past and suggest cause and effect. Complete the following sentences:

1/ **Zero conditional**: if world poverty continues,

2/ **first conditional:** if logging continues in the rain forest,

3/ **second conditional:** if students spent more time practising writing,

4/ **third conditional:** if I had worn a crash helmet,

12. Comparing and Contrasting
Comparing and contrasting is a common feature of analysing a problem or situation.
1. What do we call the diagram below?

2. How can we use the diagram to compare and contrast?

3. What other graphical devices can you use to organise thoughts and language?

Compare and contrast - the grammar
The language and grammar of compare and contrast includes
comparative (-er) to the adjective or 'more'.

Superlatives are expressed by adding -est + the and 'the most+ adjective'.
Using **'intensifiers'** the comparison can be strengthened or weakened.
- ' is considerably, significantly

1/ Add some more 'intensifiers' and 'weakeners' to the list.

Can your students **compare and contrast confidently**,using a variety of forms and **intensifiers** and **weakeners** to keep their writing lively and interesting ?

13. Proofreading

The key to eliminating errors in the portfolio and the controlled written exam is the ability to proofread effectively.

Students frequently 'run out of time' or think the time is better spent writing more of their answer. You need to **get their 'buy-in'** about **proofreading** so that your values become their values.

Ask them:
1/ do you always leave time to proofread in exams? Why/not?
2/ how much time do you spend doing it?
3/ with your portfolio, when do you proofread?
What advice would you offer for each of these points?

The benefits of proofreading include some of the points we have already looked at:

4/ How would you summarise the benefits of proofreading to your students?

Some top tips to help proofreading

Add your own notes to these points to help convince your students of the value of proofreading:
1/ print it out....

2/ use coloured pens ....

3/ read out loud all or parts of your work.

4/ Ask a friend and help each other proofread your work.
N.B. This does not mean getting your friend to write it for you!

5/ leave yourself time to proofread more than once.

6/ Refer to previously corrected pieces of work
7/ **proofreading is a valuable activity**

8/ don't throw away work which has been previously corrected.

9/ What other tips can you add?

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