



Travel – At the Airport

Audience: Upper Primary students – Drama unit based Travelling

Inspiration: context. I was two weeks late starting Term 2 as I had been overseas with my family.

Duration: 6 weeks, although it could easily be made to last longer

Goals: Learning general skills in a specific context. Such as: waiting in a queue; being ready for your turn; listening to questions; being prepared with questions and answers; transitioning from one place to another; giving and receiving things (in this case, documents); making eye contact (or at least, looking up so that you are more ready to receive information); acting on information given; being creative within set parameters; learning useful phrases.

Resources:

- 2 stamp pads and stamps for Passport Control (mine said “Good work” – in German – but they had a picture on them which was all that mattered!);
- an open ended box and square bread basket which slid through it, for Security;
- a small notebook for each student with their photo inside and a picture of an Australian passport on the front;
- pretend tickets and boarding passes for each student (I used a piece of card which said “Ticket” or “Boarding pass”. I remembered some of our old tickets for some of our classes, so they had real examples, but it didn’t matter for the purpose of the exercise);
- a small rolling suitcase for some of the earlier lessons. In later lessons students could “check in” their own school bags.
- cue cards with sample phrases (in order) for the different roles of airline check-in, passenger, security checker and passport officer.

Lesson 1 – Checking in

Purpose: Introducing the unit and getting the students to think firstly about travel generally, then about air travel specifically.

Elicit general information: I began by eliciting what the students knew about how people travelled, then what they knew about going to an airport. This gave students an opportunity to talk about their own personal experience. I was aiming to draw out the four key steps after arriving at the airport and up to boarding the plane, being: check-in, security, passport control and gate lounge departure.

Check-in: I asked for students thoughts about what might happen at the check-in counter: what questions might they be asked and what might they want to know themselves. We wrote down possible phrases/questions that might be used.

Security: Similar to check-in, but we also discussed where else students might encounter security checks, such as at the football and visiting special places like Parliament.

Passport control: We spoke briefly about the purpose and expectations. Readiness was a key factor to be aware of here

Gate lounge: Being asked for the boarding pass and directed through to their seat.

Gathering specific information: We wrote down the sorts of questions and answers that students might find useful and also talked about the act of queueing and being ready to be called. We



discussed other places where people might queue (shops, the cinema, the footy etc) and how many of the questions asked and comments made at the airport would be asked and made in other places. Eg. Next! Can I help you? Where are you travelling today? Have a nice holiday! Goodness, your bag is heavy/light! What are you carrying? I also had sheets prepared for the role play which followed, so students had some structure to follow. This helped the weaker students and was a reminder for the stronger students.

Structured role play: Check-in with baggage. Modelled first with a student, then students presented in pairs before the class. Sheets given out with sample phrases.

<i>Questions/Comments</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Next please!	Hello.
Can I help you?	I'm going to (<i>Choose a country</i>)
Please put your bag on the scales.	Here it is.
It's rather heavy/light.	I have a lot of books in it/ etc
Here is your boarding pass. You board at Gate X at Y o'clock.	Thank you.
Have a nice trip.	Good bye.

Lesson 2 - Security

Purpose: Building on the previous lesson. We moved from the airline check-in counter to security, and finished "left-over" role plays from the previous week.

Elicit general information: what is Security? What is the purpose? Where do you find it? How is it done? (x-ray machines, scanning "doorways", wand searches.

Language: Looked at the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication. Why people need to be especially careful around security. "Mr Bean on Holiday" scene with the finger gun (would be good to show on screen, if really organised, but again, it was a good opportunity to elicit what the students knew and empower them by sharing this knowledge).

Role play: Modelled going through Security with a student, then (as before) did it in pairs. Some students were incredibly and alarmingly creative with the sorts of contraband they were finding and how they dealt with it (definitely some bouncers in the making!). I found myself swiftly having to ban them from finding any sorts of drugs or weapons, and to keep it at a basic and benign level of forgotten keys, phones etc.

Lesson 3 – Travel broadens the mind

Purpose: We moved away from role plays and worked more on asking questions to get information – very important when you are travelling.

So.... We played a version of Twenty Questions/Celebrity Heads which lasted the entire lesson. The categories were: Places (capital cities that we had discussed in the previous lessons); People and Modes of Transport. We did the first one with a lot of structure, and I used the whiteboard to write down the questions, trying to demonstrate how you use general questions and move to more specific questions. The students usually sit in a semi-circle, and each took it in turn to ask a question.

Lesson 4 – Even more travel broadens the mind



Purpose: Asking relevant questions is not always easy for special needs students, especially as they don't always hear answers that were given, as concentrating can be challenging in a busy environment, or waiting for your turn can cause you to tune out. Many people wanted a go "up the front", and so we spent another lesson doing this. It was really worth while, as it gave the students more practice at working out how to get information by elimination what they don't need in the search for what they do need.

Lesson 5 – Passport Control

Purpose: Teaching students about the procedure at and purpose of Passport Control, and putting together three consecutive airport scenarios for students to do all at once.

Role Play: The purpose was for students to practise lining up at check-in, check in their baggage, proceed to Security and end up at Passport Control. This is where most of my props were used. I also had a slightly different list of questions and answers for the check-in, which gave the students prompts for questions and answers, as well as a few key phrases.

Set up: I set up two tables as check-in counters, with the "scales" between them. One table was for Security and another served as Passport Control. Each job had two students, and the remainder were the passengers, going through the queues. Each passenger had their passport and ticket, and received their boarding pass at the check in counter. They had a ball.

Lesson 6 – Reaching our destination

Purpose: Drawing together the lessons over the last five weeks in a more finessed and disciplined (ie: timed) manner to ensure every student had a turn at a role they wanted to play, in addition to being a passenger, which everyone had to do.

Role Play: Having had a go the previous lesson, the students knew what to do and were raring to go. The previous lesson I had written down who DIDN'T want to be on check-in, security or passport control, and had written out lists of students who I thought would work well together at the different jobs. The great success of this lesson was that one student (a very reserved girl), who hadn't wanted to do any of these three jobs, decided part-way through this lesson that she did want to be on Passport Control. I also timed each "rotation" at 2 minutes, which meant that – in our 45 minute lesson – everyone has a turn at doing what they had wanted.

Set up: This was the same as the previous week, except that when the students first came into the classroom, I had set up their chairs in rows of two with an aisle down the middle, and pretended to be a stewardess welcoming them on the plane and explaining the procedure for our flight (the lesson), and that people who didn't listen would have to take the next flight which was not leaving until next term. The students thought that this was hilarious (especially my "stewardess" voice), which lost us a bit of time, but put them all in a very good mood!

OVERALL...

The students had a lot of fun doing this unit, and I believe that it was a great opportunity to practise skills which they would use in a broad range of situations – not just air travel. It gave those who had travelled a chance to share their knowledge, it provided structure for the weaker students and creative opportunities for the stronger students. And learning is strongest when the learning experience comes with laughter.