

# Being Creative in the Teaching of English Tense and Aspect

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This article is a short description of the innovative and creative teaching methods used by the author-instructor in the teaching of English tense and aspect in a remedial classroom in Assam. It briefly presents the techniques adopted by the author-instructor step by step.*

## **Introduction**

Teaching tense and aspect had been one of the most challenging tasks that I undertook in my classroom until last semester. Since I met my students once a week and I had lost several classes because of holidays in the previous semester, I ventured this semester to teach all the tenses and aspects in English in a single class instead of confining the class to the teaching of one particular tense alone. This time I decided to use technology and that made all the difference.

## **Description**

In the first fifteen minutes, I told my students a story in the past tense. The time of the story was emphasized several times to make the students conscious of the fact that the events narrated were referring to a time in the past.

It was followed by a PowerPoint presentation. The first slide was the written version of the story in the past tense in all its aspects. In the next slide, the tense and

aspect markers and the references to time in the story were shown in red. It was followed by a slide in which only the past tense and aspect markers were shown in a table; this was then followed by a slide in which the tense and aspect markers in present and future tense were shown in an enlarged table with a column showing the time of the story. Instead of the grammatical terms used for tense and aspects, the corresponding dates were shown in the table with a comprehensive list of the tense and aspect markers. The next slide was the same story with the places for the tense and aspect markers left blank.

Then, in the final part of the class period, I distributed a handout, which had a paragraph of the same story in the past tense using all the past tense and aspect markers and two paragraphs of the same story with blanks in the places for the tense and aspect markers. Then I told them the time reference for the two paragraphs separately and asked them to fill in the rest of the blanks. They took ten minutes to complete the task. I asked them to write

their roll numbers on the top of their sheets and to exchange their sheets with each other. Then I showed them the correct answers on the screen asking them to evaluate their friend's answer sheet accordingly. In the mean time, I changed the slide and showed a new slide with the picture of an angel with wings. I asked those students who had correct answers of 80%

or more to raise their hands. To my surprise, more than half of the class raised hands and I told them that they were angels with wings. I changed the slide once again to show the class a picture of an angel without wings. As I left the class, I told them that the rest of the students in the class were angels with their wings about to grow.

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- ELTAI Literature Special Interest Group (SIG) [Google Group]
- ELTAI Computer Technology SIG [Yahoo Group]

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