

Task: Watch the video excerpt and pay particular attention to the routines used at the beginning and at the end of the lesson. Note down the type of routines the teacher uses and provide examples of routines that you are using.

Suggested Answer

The teacher uses “caretaker talk” as part of her routines. She integrates in her practices, techniques used by parents when helping children acquire and extend mother tongue. She uses simple language and repetitive chunks in English to greet the children at the beginning and at the end of the class. She also uses gestures and actions enriched with language which children hear in their social environment, in the street, on television, in their games. In this way children, get exposed to meaningful input and respond to social interactions, using English in order to communicate.

Having adopted the technique of the puppet, a toy animal which has become the children’s English speaking friend, she sets a reasonable background for her task (teaching the language for an Irish dance and the dance itself). Additionally, the puppet creates an obvious reason why children have to speak in English.

Starting the class with a song is another routine, which helps lower the affective filter and re create group bonds. Through repetition of the song children establish pronunciation and stress and slower children have the time to catch up with the rest of the class and feel secure that they can do something in English.

Seating arrangement, in a way which facilitates eye contact between the teacher and the learners, is an additional routine. Having the children to sit on cushions in order to explain new things or to tell a story, helps introduce the element of surprise and sets the register for the classroom activity. Story telling is a group activity and changing from desks to sitting on the floor adds to the flavour of activities which aim to help children experience language in a relaxing and natural way.