

# Xperiment with ESOL

Stimulate your brain in the Mind Maze, test the senses, reveal the magic of materials and experiment with energy. You can examine the parts of a giant eyeball, lift a car or experience a tornado being formed. There's even a Discovery Den for the under 5s. With over 30 exhibits of hands-on fun, it's a science spectacular.

This is a short explanation of four exhibits and how they can be used with ESOL learners of all levels. It would be possible to use a worksheet for this part of the museum but its strength lays in non-paper based learning. The learners can investigate aspects of light, sound, electricity, forces, energy and materials. It would be very useful to introduce the learners to the appropriate vocabulary before their visit.

Suggested duration: 30 min.      Location: 2nd floor

## **1. Hands on area**

This area provides access to ten excellent interactive puzzles and games. The puzzles can provide excellent opportunities to practice and improve many communicative functions from the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum including:

- Ask for clarification
- Check back
- Correct
- Give information, as part of a simple explanation
- Give single step directions and instructions

In order to promote as much communication as possible it is best if the learners work in groups of no less than three. They will naturally start to help their fellow learners by suggesting ideas and giving directions in order to solve the puzzles. The learners should be encouraged to speak English as much as is appropriate.

The Xperiment Gallery is always staffed with Museum Presenters who are there to help visitors with the interactives. The Presenters will offer their advice if needed but they also offer an opportunity for students to practise other communicative functions, such as:

- Express a preference
- Express thanks
- Greet
- Respond to greetings
- Make requests – ask for something
- Make requests – ask someone for something

- Respond to a request
- Take leave

## **2. Sensory Boxes**

This interactive encourages people to work out what something is without using the sense of sight. The learner has to rely on their senses of touch, smell and hearing to identify wood, coconut, cotton and coal.

This interactive works best if the learners listen to a partner who describes in English what they can feel, smell and hear and then find out as a group if they got the right answer. This interactive encourages and develops the use of descriptive and explanative language as it does not rely on visual cues.

## **3. Solar Mobile**

The aim of this interactive is to use moveable mirrors in order to reflect light onto solar panels in order to power mini propellers. This could help with giving directions and instructions as well as responding to requests. One learner could take charge of a mirror with their eyes closed. Another learner could stand behind them, with their hands behind their backs, and give verbal instructions until they successfully power a propeller.

## **4. Sound Beams**

This interactive uses beams of light to make music. By interrupting four beams of light learners can create their own musical compilations. This interactive is good for promoting discussion and expressing likes, dislikes, feelings, wishes and views.

Small groups can make their own music compilation and then have them reviewed by the other members of the group. They can say what they like and disliked about it and why and then have a go themselves.

## **Summary**

These are just some of the many interactives in our Xperiment Gallery that can help ESOL learners improve their English. The number of visitors allowed in the gallery is limited by health and safety regulations. Groups (more than 10 people) must therefore pre-book a timed session in the gallery. We would advise that the learners follow a structure similar to the one shown here to guide them around the gallery. After that they can explore the other exhibits and have fun discovering new things on their own.

There are text panels that give an explanation for all of the exhibits; these will be of use to higher ability learners. They should be encouraged to cascade this more detailed information down to the other learners as they go around the gallery.