

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

Module(s): 9, Critical Thinking Skills
Date submitted: 13.10.2006

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Project Reviewer: Hasan Bedir

Give information for:

- Students' age(s): 20-21
- # of students: 30

- Language level: Advanced ELT Students
Elementary
- Other (optional): The specific context where the change will be made is the methodology courses given to prospective teachers of English.

My Class Now (Snapshot)

Provide a description of the item in your classroom that you are targeting for change:

Methodology course not catering for prospective teachers' needs for critical thinking and systematic reflection

Technique(s) I use *now*.

Teacher-centered evaluation of students' micro-teaching performance so not enough opportunity for students for critical inquiry and reflection in and on action (Schon) as prospective teachers

My Class in the Future (Vision)

Provide a description of what you expect the item to look like after you've made the change:

Methodology course catering for prospective teachers' needs for critical thinking and systematic reflection

Technique(s) from this module that I *will* use.

Evaluation of students' micro-teaching performance from the perspectives of both lecturer and students' when students are engaged in critical thinking and reflection on and in action through asking and responding to questions and comments requiring higher order thinking skills; an ownership approach to teacher learning

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Material(s) I use *now*.

- Text-book
- Articles
- Teacher’s and students’ comments on teaching performance

Material(s) or ideas from this module that I *will* use.

- Articles on critical thinking and reflection
- Higher order thinking skills question templates
- Bloom’s taxonomy of learning domains
- Individual and group evaluation tasks for critical inquiry and reflective learning (inquiry-based, reflective, and exploratory discussion)
- Socratic questioning

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Additional Explanation from Project Creator

In “My Class in the Future(Vision) you described and predicted a change that you would like to see happen in your class. Provide additional information for the following related items. Write as though you are informing a person who knows nothing at all about your educational setting.

1. The benefits I predict from this change: Like many others I believe that critical and reflective skills should be fostered in teachers. However, efforts directed to do this is usually in the form of in-service training after the teachers start their profession. To my mind, it should start earlier from the pre-service level. Perhaps one of the most appropriate courses to incorporate instructional practices geared to developing would-be teachers’ critical and reflective skills is “the language teaching methodology course” as one of the objectives of this course is to enable the pre-service teachers to put what they have gained in theoretical terms into practice. In my case, there are two components of this course: lectures on various approaches and techniques to teach (language structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, the four skills, etc.) and students’ micro-teachings in which they prepare a lesson plan and present the lesson in the classroom. Discussion following these presentations is in the form of lecturer’s and peers’ comments on the performance. To my observation, this sort of approach does not allow for developing reflection on performance through critical questioning and thinking. Therefore, through the change I have described above I expect the following benefits:
 - To train prospective language teachers as critical thinkers and reflective practitioners by making them become involved in asking and responding to questions requiring higher order thinking skills.
 - More active learning through self-analysis of one’s performance as well as the others’.
 - Prospective teachers who are conscious of the rationale behind their specific behaviours and attitudes in teaching and who can “derive meaningful insights from their learning experiences” (Ngeow & Kong, 2003).
 - Prospective teachers who own their process of learning and what becoming an effective language teacher entails.
2. Challenges I expect:
 - The number of 30 students within a single class might make it difficult to assess the benefit of the change.
 - It may take longer to make learners become familiar with concepts and the techniques.

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3. How I will address those challenges:
 - I will turn this challenge to an advantage because more voices mean more reliable data to assess the change.
 - I will add extra class hours to my current time-table.
4. Steps needed in order to complete the change:
 - a) introducing students to critical thinking and reflection (through assigning the readings used in this course)
 - b) introducing students to higher order thinking skills, Bloom’s taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking Skills Questions and Socratic Questioning.
 - c) Do a pilot on a specific micro-teaching.
 - d) Deal with problems and clarifications.
5. Timeline for completing the change: One semester (or I can extend it to two terms even after I have completed this course).
6. How I will assess the degree of success of the change:
 - Higher Order Thinking and Questioning Rubric
 - Learners’ Feedback Sheets
 - Audio-recording of Class Discussions

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Project Reviewer Comments

1. Is the proposed change clear (the snapshot of “My Class Now” vs. a vision for “My Class in the Future”)?

It is clear enough reflecting the class we are having now and the vision seems sensible.

2. Do the steps and the amount of time allotted for the change seem realistic?

Rana, you should make up your mind for the time you will use for the changes to take place.

3. What do you believe to be the strengths of the proposed change?

I believe the changes proposed among the qualities we look for in our students.

4. Do you perceive any additional challenges and/or have additional advice for meeting challenges related to the proposed change?

Rana, you can also look for what kinds of critical thinking strategies students are developing since higher order thinking process can help them develop CT skills.

5. Does the type of assessment match the goals and outcomes of the proposed change?

Yes.

6. Other comments or questions?

Rana, as we discussed previously improving questioning will contribute a lot of things to our own setting since we are training prospective teachers who are likely to reflect their experience into their classrooms. Thus, I believe this project will contribute a lot to our setting, yet during the implementation there should be some modification to improve it pertaining to what students will reflect.