

Project Template for "Shaping the Way We Teach English"

Module(s): 9 – Critical Thinking
Date submitted: Oct. 10th, 2006

Project Creator: Rasha Halat
Project Reviewer: Ghina Al-Badawi

Give information for:

- Students' age(s): 16 - 17
- # of students: Around 30

- Language level: Upper Intermediate
- Other (optional):

My Class Now (Snapshot)

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

Technique(s) I use *now*.

- The Pedagogy of Answers

Material(s) I use *now*.

- Material from the National Curriculum Book for Grade 11
- Supplementary materials

My Class in the Future (Vision)

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

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

- The Pedagogy of Questions
- The Six Thinking Hats (from E. de Bono, <http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/sixhats.htm>)
- A variety of the discussion tasks highlighted in Karen Ngeow and Yoon-San Kong's article: "Learning Through Discussion" <http://www.ericdigests.org/2004-1/tasks.htm>

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

- The same kind of material I'm already using, because this is not optional for us, but this material would be approached differently.

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

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:** The students' critical thinking abilities will be enhanced where they will be able to think at higher-order levels. In addition, the students will be able to ask questions themselves, so as to search for the answers independently. In the long run, the students will become independent learners.
2. **Challenges I expect:** As dealing with young adults who are trained to receive the answers from teachers who "know it all", it will take more time and effort to convince the students that it would be more rewarding for them to pose questions and to search for the answers on their own. In addition, many of the students in our culture think that if the teacher doesn't give them all the answers, then that teacher is not competent enough, the fact which poses another challenge to deal with.
3. **How I will address those challenges:** I think that the best strategy to address these challenges is through training and modeling for the students some of the thinking strategies used in analysis and questioning in order to help the learners become metacognitive thinkers. As for the second challenge, I'll try to convince the students that I'll not be always there to give them the answers, so they need to search on their own.
4. **Steps needed in order to complete the change:** First, I'll start using the variety of the discussion tasks highlighted in Karen's article moving from guided tasks to inquiry based, then the reflective, and finally the exploratory tasks. This way, the students move step by step, and for each step, the teacher can model how to approach such a discussion. Later, the students themselves start asking questions that probe them to think and explore on their own.
5. **Timeline for completing the change:** I think that such change needs time and the results are not immediate, especially when the learners are not very young. Thus, I think by the period of a 4-month semester, the students will be able to manage a discussion on their own, and may be they'll be able to lead some discussions.

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

6. **How I will assess the degree of success of the change:** The success of such a change will be assessed through the ability of the students to go beyond what they have of material to explore more and to find more answers. By the end of my course of action, the students should be able to pose their own questions that would inspire them to explore more. In addition, the students will be able to answer the higher order questions in the formal tests (As suggested by my partner and peer-reviewer.)
7. **Other comments:** It is very hard to work on the concept of critical thinking because of the abstract nature of the topic, but I think that teachers would be able to tell when the students are able to "speak with their own voice and think their own thoughts" without repeating what the material or the teacher says.

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

Project Reviewer Comments

1. Is the proposed change clear (the snapshot of “My Class Now” vs. a vision for “My Class in the Future”)?
2. Do the steps and the amount of time allotted for the change seem realistic?
3. What do you believe to be the strengths of the proposed change?
4. Do you perceive any additional challenges and/or have additional advice for meeting challenges related to the proposed change?
5. Does the type of assessment match the goals and outcomes of the proposed change?
6. Other comments or questions?

1) The proposed change is very clear.

2) The steps for the change are realistic but I think it takes much more time to reach the desired change.

3) This change is much needed, though it is very hard to achieve .It needs a changing in the way students think.

4) No, well done.

5) I think you could also use formal assessment as an addition.

6) Comments I think your project is great and much needed especially in our country because as you said students are always waiting for the correct answer solely from the teacher