

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

Module(s): 3 (Integrating Skills)
Date submitted: 11/10/2006

Project Creator: Ameera Balushi
Project Reviewer: Noora Sabah

Give information for:

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

- Language level: Intermediate to upper-intermediate
- Other (optional): The course I am currently teaching focuses on writing.

My Class Now (Snapshot)

Students usually write after a reading exercise. They follow the model in their books without understanding or creativity. Weak students usually copy from good students the writing. There is no great involvement with the task.

Technique(s) I use *now*.

Students read in groups the exercise in the book. It is followed by a discussion first in groups and then with all the class. Students go back to their groups to write the task. A worksheet is given to help students with useful phrases in their writing.

Material(s) I use *now*.

- The whiteboard.
- Textbooks.
- Helping worksheets (guided writing).

My Class in the Future (Vision)

Students write in a creative way that shows understanding and reflects their style. Every student is writing according to their level.

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

Students look at pictures that promote discussion first in pairs and then in groups. Students then discuss holiday jobs and what kind of information they would want to know about the job. They then listen to an interview about a job and answer questions. Students plan a role play about applying for a job. Finally, students write a letter of application for a holiday job.

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

- Textbooks.
- Listening materials (tape/internet site).
- Guided cards for ideas for role play.
- The E-class.

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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.

Since the course I am teaching is a writing course, students expect to work solely on writing tasks that involve little else. The unit I am teaching now is about writing a letter applying for a holiday job. Many of my students don't feel related to the topic as it is not common in our society for girls to work in holidays. With the change I am proposing I hope to get my students involved in the topic with alerting their senses and integrating all the four skills in the lesson. I believe there will be better understanding of the topic and therefore better outcomes. The listening interview and the role play will contribute to a greater understanding of the task. I expect to find some difficulties in convincing students to perform in front of other students which is a challenge we usually face in our classes as students shy away because of fear, embarrassment or ridicule from others. Another problem might be the attention of other group while a group is performing the role play. As for students' reluctance, with some guidance while they plan the role play and with working gradually with weak students I believe this will be overcome. The best way, I think, is to assign very simple short roles to weak students and gradually build up on them at later stages when their confidence grows and they feel secure in the knowledge that every one is making mistakes. To gain the attention of other groups, they will be asked to answer questions about the interviews in the role play and reflect on the best applicant who is more likely to get the job and give reason for their choice. This will keep them busy and interested. I expect that such change and involvement will need at least two weeks to take place but at least students will be able to step back from the model of writing in their books and will produce a more creative writing with deeper thinking and understanding. The change will be assessable through observing their performance in the role play and in their writing of letters. I will be asking every student to write her letter of application and send it to me by e-mail in the e-class. Using the computer program will add more interest and provide help with checking spelling.

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Project Reviewer Comments

First Project Reviewer Comments

Ameera’s project is ambitious and challenging. Although the course she is teaching is writing, her aim is to make students produce their own creative writing through integrating the four skills. She would like to see her students write their own letter rather than copy the model in the text book .

However, the fundamental changes Ameera would like to make will be in the skills practiced. The lesson requires students to read a holiday job advertisement and respond to it by writing an application letter in which they give information about their own abilities and ask for more information. In fact, It is not clear why has Ameera deleted the reading of the advertisement which is originally in the task and replaced it with some ideas on cards as prompts for interviews? I think if the objective is to fill in an application form, then the suggested techniques of interview will be very beneficial. But as long as students are required to respond to an advertisement, she can instead change the interview suggested to a meeting between the applicant and the employer after accepting their application letter.

I believe, this task will need three weeks because all the skills are involved in various activities. The assessment suggested is very challenging because the teacher will have different tools of assessment. Students will also need practice in interviewing. Moreover, students will be very enthusiastic about sending their letters to the teacher via e-mail.

When I taught this particular lesson I cut real job ads from English newspapers and made copies of them and gave them to my students to choose the ad they though more interesting and suited their abilities. Then, they wrote a letter applying for the job advertised and asking for more information. They were very enthusiastic about it. What made them like the task more is that I chose ads that required ladies applicants only like ladies beauty saloons, ladies health cubs, secretaries and private tutors.

Ameera can overcome students shyness in the role play by making students do the role play in their smaller groups instead of in front of the whole class. Then, she can ask for volunteers to act it out in front of the class. I am sure that Ameera will have brilliant results after implementing this project.

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Second Project Reviewer Comments

A well-prepared plan. Your clarification made it clear that it is an integrated skill project. I wish you all the best in applying it.

Post Peer Review Comments

The change that I proposed to the lesson is not replacing the tasks in the book, but rather adding up to them to integrate the four skills. Reading Noora’s comments reminded me that I have not mentioned that students will be reading the two letters in their books that are responding to the advertisement and compare the style of the two writers and reflect on them. This stage will come after the role play with students choosing a job from the previously discussed in the lesson. I really liked Noora’s idea of collecting ads from newspapers to add more authenticity and interest. As for the role play, the aim is that students plan interviews after listening to one and answering some questions. I aim at eliciting from them the kind of information an applicant would want to know in an interview as they are required to ask for more information in their letter of application for a job.