

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

Module(s): Modules 3 (Integrating Skills), 6 (Managing Large Classes), and 8 (Authentic Materials)

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Project Reviewer: Muna Al-Gunaid

Give information for:

- Students' age(s): 19-20
- # of students: 50 (1st year University)

- Language level: intermediate
- Other (optional):

My Class Now (Snapshot)

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

Ss are used to work on prepared topics which they present to their classmates. Although all the Ss are involved, the activity does not need much preparation and there are no clear goals i.e. end-product that the teacher will aim at.

Technique(s) I use *now*.

- Ss come to class with topics they have prepared at home.
- In pairs Ss talk about their topics.
- Ss exchange partners.
- All the students are involved.
- No facilities used except the whiteboard.
- Each student presents his/her topic in front of the class.
- Listening and speaking skills dominate the lesson.

My Class in the Future (Vision)

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

Ss will work on a project. It is a task-oriented activity where the Ss will be given a problem and they have to collect information, solve a problem and present the final outcome as an oral presentation (language-oriented activity).

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

- Using authentic materials: Tr. displays on the screen pictures beggars, people in rags walking in the streets, a mother with her crippled child lying on the sidewalk, etc.
- Prediction: Ss guess what the lesson is going to be about.
- Brainstorming: Ss in groups brainstorm the causes of poverty.
- Modeling (Tr. models activity as an example).
- Interviewing (Yes/No questions and Wh-questions)
- Integrating skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening).
- Collecting/ summarizing data.
- Oral presentation (Ss make suggestions).

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

Material(s) I use *now*.

- Ss texts.
- White board/marker.

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

- Pictures of the poor in Aden/across the worlds.
- Interview questions/ in English and L1.
- Multi-media projector.
- Marker/whiteboard.
- A model of the interview sheet.
- Big white sheets of paper.
- Colored pens/crayons.

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 activity will mirror real-world situation.
 - Ss will be communicating beyond the classroom environment.
 - Collaborative work.
 - Ss will practice the interviewing skills (even though in L1).
 - Ss will be using more than one skill at a time.
 - Ss will learn the skills of collecting data.
 - Ss will make use of the cognitive /meta cognitive/ communication strategies to help them learn inside and outside the classroom.
 - Ss will learn how to self-monitor the activity (self-reliant).
 - Ss will learn the skills of summarizing.

2. Challenges I expect:
 - Working with a large class is challenging.
 - The activity will fail if instructions are not clear.
 - Translating the interviews from English to Arabic vice versa.
 - Some of the girls, who are veiled, may not like the idea of interviewing beggars/poor people in the streets.
 - The number of questions for the interview.
 - Ss may use Arabic in their groups in class.

3. How I will address those challenges:
 - Use my own class management techniques gained through experience + some ideas from the article ‘Creating a Climate for Learning.’ http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr155.shtml
 - Make sure instructions are clear –repeat instructions, model the activity.
 - Ss don’t have to use standard Arabic when translating or even to translate it literally – just a summary of what’s required.

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

- Those who volunteer can interview poor people in the streets (5 volunteers in each area -5 areas Tawahi, Maala, Crater, Sheikh Othman and Khormaksar.)
- The questions will be limited to 5 to give specific answers.
- Since the teacher will be going round as the Ss are brainstorming the interview questions there will be some kind of control and Ss will be timed so as not to give a chance for Ss to talk.

1. Steps needed in order to complete the change:

- Clips of pictures taken of poor people from all over the world are shown on the screen and the Ss are asked to guess the theme of the lesson. Using prompts Tr. will help Ss to get to the word ‘poverty.’
- Tr. starts the group discussion by asking a student, ‘What is the cause of poverty or why are some people poor?’
- Tr. puts Ss in groups of ten and every 5 students work together to come up with some reasons why some people are poor.
- Tr. goes round as groups start working and using prompts/ hints Tr. helps Ss to come up with new ideas.
- Class discussion Tr. writes Ss responses on the board.
- Together with the help of the Tr. Ss come up with five important reasons.
- In their groups Ss write the questions e.g. Do you have a job? (If Yes) What do you do? How much is your salary? (it’s normal in Yemen to ask about the salary) Does it cover your expenses? Do you chew qat? (qat is a plant grown in Yemen, Ethiopia. Men some women spend most of the afternoons chewing qat. The plant is some kind of a drug which activates the brain for sometime. It is claimed to exhaust the budget.)
- In an interview sheet Ss write on the left side the 5 question and the translations and on the right side 3 columns –Yes, No and Other (for the responses of Wh-questions) Tr. asks Ss to write the interviewees age and residence (to find out where do most poor people come from)
- The 25 volunteers – 5 in a group (identifiers used to name the groups e.g. Tawahi, Sheikh Othman, Crater, Maala and Khormaksar) are sent to areas mentioned where they have to interview the poor.
- In the next Speaking class the volunteers present the results to the rest of the group (5 interviewers + 5ss) .
- In groups they discuss the results.
- Ss summarize the results.
- Tr. helps Ss with vocabulary.
- In groups the Ss write the results on big posters and the posters are displayed on the bulletin board.
- Tr. allows Ss to go round and read the surveys.
- Ss vote for the poster with the most reasons.

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

- Next the students work in pairs. They choose a problem from the list given on the posters and try to find a solution to this problem e.g. the Ss found out that many families are poor because the father (who supports the family)chews qat everyday i.e. spend most of his money on qat.
- The pair tries to find solutions to this problem and then joins another pair (to form a group) which has come up with solutions for the same problem. They discuss their solutions and once all the pairs are exhausted. The groups present their ideas to the class by making suggestions using ‘should/shouldn’t’.

2. Timeline for completing the change:

- 3 classes - 2 hours each.

3. How I will assess the degree of success of the change:

- Task-oriented activity: 5 points will be given to every student for the first part of the activity i.e. all work done before the oral presentation.
- Language-oriented activity: For the oral presentation Ss will be assessed according to the following criteria:
 - Eye-contact.
 - Correct pronunciation.
 - Correct grammar.
 - Organization of ideas.
 - Fluency.

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”)?

Yes, it is. But in "my class now", I think there should be clarification about "preparation", is it from the Ss' or Tr.'s side? And in "my class in the future", I think after collecting information there should be analyzing and synthesizing before solving.

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

The steps do seem realistic and the time allotted too except:

- The division of each activity in each class i.e. what activity will be done in the first class and what in the second etc.
- After the volunteers present the result to the rest of the group, I think it is better to "specify" what Ss should do i.e. analyzing and synthesizing the result instead of discussing.
- It is better to devote a space at the top of the interview sheet for the interviewee's age and residence.

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

- The theme is interesting, motivating and very relevant to our reality.
- One can feel a sense of creativity and strong confidence in the project creator personality.
- The creator knows well what Ss need and what assistance to provide during working in the activities.
- The consistency of the goals to the way of assessment.
- The various benefits the Ss can gain from the project.

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

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

- The number of girls is more than the number of boys at university and 90% of them are veiled, so having volunteer from them is a challenge.
- Choosing volunteers and encouraging them as they themselves will face difficulties in addressing the poor.
- I personally need to know some of your classroom management techniques that you are going to use to address the challenge of large class in this project.

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

Yes, the type of assessment does match the goals deeply. There only need to be added a specification of why and how the 5 points will be distributed in the task-oriented activity (what point for what task) and how you can follow each student's involvement to give him/her points.

6. Other comments or questions?

The whole project is novel, motivating and very relevant to our reality. There is only one positive point that can be taken from "my class now "which is Ss choice. I think Ss should be given the choice of the problem from a list created by Ss and Tr. This can give them a sense of independence and confidence.

Note:

You may notice the repetition of the expression "I think" in my review .This is because I feel that my experience does not qualify me to peer your work. In fact I AM LEARNING FROM YOUR PROJECTS.

I wish you all the success.