

Project Template for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

Module(s): 09 Critical Thinking Skills
Date submitted: Oct 12 2006

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Project Reviewer: Ameera Al-Baluchi

Give information for:

- Students' age(s): 16-17
- # of students: 32

- Language level: High achievers (upper intermediate)
- Other (optional): Mixed abilities science class

My Class Now (Snapshot)

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

My class is a science class. The students are highly motivated and high achievers academically. However, they do not take risk using their critical thinking skills beyond the class context. They take what the teacher says for granted and have low self-esteem. When they do a task in the class, they provide answers to the asked questions only and never elaborate more on their ideas or justify them.

My Class in the Future (Vision)

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

I would like my students to use their critical thinking skill in discussing topics that are raised in the class and think creatively. My aim is make students question any issue and examine it carefully and then make their own contribution. This will require the practice of high order thinking skills like analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

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Technique(s) I use *now*.

- Reading advertisements and discuss their positive and negative effects on people.
- Asking/answer comprehension questions.
- Elaborate on the topic and have a class discussion about advertisements.

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

The module I will teach is about ‘Money’ and the lesson I will implement this project in is about ‘Advertisements’. I will use Edward de Bono’s ‘six thinking hats’ strategy for students to practice their critical thinking skills through brainstorming, reflection and problem solving.

First, I will explain the six thinking hats strategy to my students who can make their own hats and color them before the start of the lesson. Then I will divided the class into smaller groups and give the students the chance to ask questions using the hats and then report their findings to the class.

The following questions are examples of the ones they will ask:

- White Hat: what do you know about advertisements?
- Black Hat: what are the negatives of advertisements?
- Yellow Hat: what are the benefits of advertisements?
- Red Hat: How do you feel about advertisements?
- Green Hat: What changes would you like to see in advertisements to make them more realistic ?
- Blue Hat: How does advertising influence youth choice for one trademark (brand) over another?

My students are good at English. I expect them to make a debate about the positive and negative sides of advertisements.

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Material(s) I use *now*.

- Pictures as prompts.
- The textbook.
- Magazines.

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

- Pictures.
- Multimedia /video clips.
- Realia.
- Brochures.
- Magazines/newspapers.

Additional Explanation from Project Creator

By adopting the ‘Six Thinking Hats’ in my class and implementing it, I would like to see my students practice their different critical thinking skills in real context using high order thinking skills levels. Explaining the six hats will not be an easy task because it will need clear demonstration to make the practice easy so I will use this lesson as a first step in developing this strategy. In the beginning, I expect my students to be confused and make mistakes about it especially that they will need training also in the types of questions they will ask for each hat. I estimate that my students will need three sessions to master the skills required as I mentioned earlier in the snapshot, they are high achievers and very good at English. The assessment of this plan can be done in three different stages through direct observation. The first one is in the beginning ,after explaining the hats strategy to students. The second one, is during the activity when students use the hats for asking questions. The third one, is during the discussion when students apply the six different ways of thinking in generating creative ideas.

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Project Reviewer Comments

Noora has approached a very important problem we face in many of our classes. Besides dealing with low achievers, we frequently have to challenge very outstanding students who fear taking risks as they are so self-conscious and constantly worry of being judged wrongly and their main aim is the accumulation of grades to help gain scholarships. I think her plan is a very interesting one with an excellent choice of topic and techniques. The topic she chose is a very relevant one to their lives and allows a lot of deep thought and analysis. She does have the high level of students to her side. The technique she chose is a very challenging one especially trying to get students to adopt it, but I think with Noora's demonstration and practice and a lot of patience, there will be a significant change. The proposed time limit is very realistic and sufficient since students are high achievers but only need some push in the right direction. Her assessment plan of three stages is a very good one and matches the aim of her change. I just want to suggest personalizing the hats in Noora's scheme by assigning the following hats:

- White, the company or business owner.
- Black, the advertising campaigner.
- Yellow, the viewer.
- Red, the buyer.
- Green, a positive critic.
- Blue, a negative critic.

Post Peer Review Comments

I would like to thank Ameera for her encouraging words and for the brilliant suggestions of the names of the hats. I think this will make students actively involved in the task because each one in the group will have a task (hat) to work on.