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**Winter - Spring 2011, Shaping Chile Networks
University of Oregon, American English Institute
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Action Plan Project for “Shaping the Way We Teach English”

In this online course, we are focusing on new teaching techniques and resources. Choose one technique or classroom innovation that you would like to incorporate into your class, and develop an action plan (below) for accomplishing this. Please give as much detail as possible.

Date Created: 6/1/11

Class: 9-10th graders

Name of Action Plan Creator: Adrian Barnes

Number of Students: 10

New teaching techniques or ideas I plan to use: collaborative learning, student autonomy, critical thinking, peer evaluation

Language Level: ALTE 1-2

My Class Now

Teacher centered, with minimal input from students, involves the lower levels of Bloom’s taxonomy (understanding and noticing). Pair work exists, but based primarily on acting out book-based dialogues. Effective input of information but little opportunity for evaluation and analysis. No student involvement in the evaluation process. Students still rely too much on translation for vocabulary problems, and will seek that from each other even if the teacher declines.

My Class in the Future (My Vision)

More student autonomy and exploration of various learning skills; Student-centered environment, with more collaboration and cooperation in groups; More analysis and evaluation, with full student participation in the evaluation process. Use of communicative strategies to avoid translation, such as describing words and contextualizing them.

Additional Explanation from Action Plan Creator

The benefits I predict from this change: The students will understand and realize the importance of being able to learn from each other. They will be able to exercise their own ways of learning, rather than have only one method of instruction. They will be able to design a project and evaluate their own performance. The variety of activity types will enable the students to use their own learning styles and maximize the opportunity for each student to flourish under their own conditions, and actively contribute to a global objective, enabling them to develop skills which can be useful outside the language learning context.

Challenges I expect: Building awareness of the importance of collaborative learning, and having the students understand its value. The students at the moment are used to a more passive role in the learning process, and are not used to communicating freely in English, although they have proved that they can do so. Creating the conditions that can foster this environment, and allowing students to see the merit of their efforts at several opportunities are additional challenges. I also intend to overcome the sense of shame that students often have when they use English, as they often feel overwhelmed or that people will immediately criticize them if they get something wrong. Finally, helping them understand that the learning process can be constructive and peer based, rather than having them expect the teacher to guide them all the time.

How I will address those challenges: Providing constant support, and varying activities so that a wide range of fun and meaningful activities are presented. The activities will encourage a more constructive approach to learning, and thus reduce the need for constant error correction and help to ease the feeling of inhibition in communication. The students will be gently coerced into contributing, and their full involvement in the whole process will foster collaboration.

Steps and timeline (schedule) for completing the change: Based on weekly classes of 3 hours each, where one hour per class is devoted to the project and the rest is conducted outside of class hours.

Week 1: Establishing Goals, presenting news reports (YouTube, Newspapers). The students will be exposed to a variety of different news sources and real events, contextualizing the situation and building language awareness so that they have the tools to communicate, having seen this exercised in real life.

Week 2: Debate on topic- Feedback. The students choose a topic they have seen and debate and discuss in groups, either as an organized debate, or a Socrates circle, where students survey others on their opinion of the issue, and report back to the class afterwards.

Week 3: Students prepare video- Establish rubrics with students. Students make their own video- they can conduct street surveys, interviews and news reports, based on the model they have previously seen. They also are involved in creating the parameters for evaluation, thus establishing the conditions by which they will be evaluated.

Week 4: Students Evaluate video- peer observation. Each video is presented to the rest of the class, and the groups conduct peer evaluation based on their performance.

How I will assess the degree of success of the change: Successful completion of the project (final video of 5 minutes in length on a news topic), successful completion of rubric and evaluation criteria (evaluation carried out by students).