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**Winter - Spring 2011, Shaping Chile Networks
University of Oregon, American English Institute
Author: Ximena Figueroa**

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: 5/27/11

Class: 10th grade

Name of Action Plan Creator: Ximena Figueroa San Martín

Number of Students: 12

New teaching techniques or ideas I plan to use: Using social networks for improving vocabulary and language skills in English.

Language Level: low intermediate

My Class Now

Classes are mainly instructional and teacher-centered. Students work individually or in groups for projects that do not involve free writing or natural speaking. Most of the activities are standardized dialogues or writing for answering questions on a test. Students use social networks only in their L1 and not for learning purposes. Using English is only limited to the classroom and is conducted by the teacher according to the content or topic but not from a communicative approach. Students tend to feel intimidated to speak English and feel embarrassed when repeating or presenting dialogues; they speak English only if they have to. When the teacher is not monitoring them, they go back to Spanish and get distracted from the activity. They do not see the advantage of using group work for improving their level mainly because of fear to making mistakes or lack of vocabulary to express their ideas. Reading comprehension is achieved mainly by guessing or inferring the content of the reading. Writing is poorly involved in assessment, though students are well trained in listening, but have difficulties expressing their comprehension.

My Class in the Future (My Vision)

Students have to use a social network (Facebook) to create an account and become part of a closed group only for the class and post on the weekends (they can use nicknames to identify themselves). This is a project to work on every language ability, so the teacher will follow the students' progress through the Facebook page (outside the class schedule). The teacher will post the first comment as an example, and then all students have to post a comment in which they introduce themselves and give some personal info; talk about their interests such as favorite music, food, hobbies, movies and sports. After the teacher's post, each student has to respond to it, and they can also make comments about their classmates' posts, so they can share information and find common interests to talk about. Every week the teacher posts a new comment – 1st week is an introduction, 2nd week is about a movie, 3rd week a TV show, and the last week is a song - supported with a video. So, if it is a song, the teacher will post the video with the lyrics so the students are able to read and listen and the same time; the same if it's a movie or TV show; the video must have subtitles or closed captions. Then they can discuss if they like it or not, and give opinions about its message. After each post of the teacher, the students have to make a post themselves in their own "walls" following the same format.

Every week we will discuss with the students in class what was seen on the Facebook walls.

Additional Explanation from Action Plan Creator

In “My Class in the Future (My Vision)” above, you described a change 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 about your educational setting.

1. **The benefits I predict from this change:** With this activity I plan to promote critical thinking and cooperative learning; it has the advantage of avoiding the students’ embarrassment and pressure to speak for grades. They will feel more comfortable since they will speak about things they are interested in, and by using the web, writing will be more fun, and they will receive feedback from me through private messages. It is a varied activity since it involves all the abilities of the language. It’s interactive and motivating. It gives them the opportunity to think critically, express their own ideas and make judgments about different topics. It involves different learning styles, and it has a wide range of possibilities since each student has her/his own personal interests and preferences.
2. **Challenges I expect:** Lots of mistakes in writing and excessive use of translators.
3. **How I will address those challenges:** by providing the appropriate feedback to the students, and by monitoring their writing, suggesting that they use dictionaries instead of translators, giving them links to online dictionaries.
4. **Steps and timeline (schedule) for completing the change:**
 - a. Creating an account (week 1)
 - b. Making their online introduction and first post (week 2)
 - c. Following the teacher’s posts and making their own. (weeks 3 to 6)
 - d. Discussing in class about the posts on the Facebook walls. (weeks 3 to 6)
5. **How I will assess the degree of success of the change:**

Using a rubric. The students have to fulfill an expected amount of words and content in each post, and they have to participate when discussing in class, and express the same ideas. During each discussion we will analyze the writings and common mistakes committed by the students (anonymously) and check the spelling, grammar, etc. As the project goes on, I’ll increase the level of difficulty of the tasks, including new vocabulary and challenging topics.