Organizing multimedia pop music presentations

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Quick guide

Keywords: Group work, music, technology, presentation, PowerPoint

Learner English level: Beginners and above

Learner maturity: High school and above

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Activity time: 2 to 4 weeks

Materials: Computers, projector, CD player

Organizing group music presentations is an excellent way to create a communicative language activity in a listening skills course and provides a way to assess students' skills in other skill areas (Haskell, 1998). It has also been shown to increase student motivation and perception of success in a cooperative learning environment (Servetter, 1999). Additionally, students in our courses utilized Microsoft's PowerPoint software to deliver dynamic multimedia presentations, mixing various media forms (text, audio, visual, spoken) that are commonplace communication tools in today's world. The following is a summary of a group project that can be used to enhance a music-based listening course.

Preparation

Make a handout that explains the project or use the Music Presentation handout (see Appendix 1) and Evaluation Sheets (see Appendix 2).

Procedure

Step 1: Divide students into groups of three or four. Distribute the handout that explains the project. Emphasize that everyone in the group will receive the same grade.

Step 2: Each group picks a song to present.

Step 3: Students decide and assign roles to each group member. For example, a *leader* who monitors how everyone is doing in the group and communicates with the instructor (about getting instructions, reporting the group's progress, and asking specific questions), a *designer* who plans and designs the PowerPoint slides (including the layout, template, and organization), a

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researcher who finds appropriate resources from the Internet (such as photos, videos, text articles, interviews, and lyrics), and a *writer* who is in charge of putting information together (summarizing and rewording from resources to produce the PowerPoint slides and speech script).

Step 4: Assign students the number and content of slides. At the beginning of class, inform the leader how many slides they need to finish by the end of each class. The leader should report the group's progress to the instructor before the class ends. Give feedback on the content and English. Possible examples of slide content can include: reasons why the group picked the song; summary of the song; favorite lyrics and interpretations; information about the musician; other recommendations on this genre, theme, or musician.

Step 5: After students finish making their slides, they should prepare what they will say for each slide, dividing the slides equally among group members.
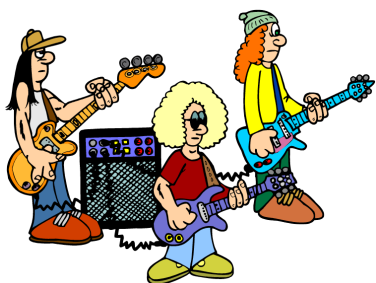
Step 6: Before the presentation, give an Evaluation Sheet to each group. Groups need to decide how many points to give each presentation, excluding their own. Possible criteria are: Did you understand most of their speech? Did you learn interesting information about the musician? Were the PowerPoint slides well designed?

Step 7: Groups do their presentation and play the music they chose.

Step 8: Give points for each presentation. Possible criteria are: Did each slide contain the necessary information? Did everyone participate in the presentation? Did the PowerPoint slides effectively support their presentation?

Step 9: Students vote on which presentation they liked the best. In addition, provide your own feedback. Alternatively, focus not on which

presentation students liked best, but on good points from each one. Since all students within each group will receive the same grade, this may be a better way to give everyone positive reinforcement (see Evaluation Sheet in Appendix 2).

Conclusion

This project can be used (with modifications) from beginner to advanced levels. It is important for instructors to approve and monitor students' choice of songs, **making sure the song is appropriate for the level of the class.** Songs that are slow and have repetitive lyrics tend to work best. This activity works well for fostering student relationships, displaying student talents which are often overlooked in the language classroom, and promoting further interest in English pop music by exposing students to new music selected by their peers.

References

Haskell, D. (1998). Theme music presentations: Organizing oral audio-visual student presentations of popular songs. *JALT Focus on the Classroom*, 23-27.

Servetter, B. (1999). Cooperative learning and learner-centered projects for lower-level university students. *JALT Applied Materials*, 106-116.

Appendixes

The appendixes for this article are available online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/2010_02a.pdf>.

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

Teaching prosodic patterns through English movies

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Quick guide

Keywords: Prosody, intonation, stress, pronunciation, *Napoleon Dynamite* (2004)

Learner English level: Intermediate-advanced

Learner maturity: High school or university

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Activity time: 60 minutes

Materials: DVD *Napoleon Dynamite* (2004) or another teen movie, handout (see Appendix 1)

Prosody is a broad term that refers to several types of speech, such as stress/accent, intonation, and timing. In order to teach my students English prosodic patterns, I chose my favorite movie, *Napoleon Dynamite*. In the movie, the speech patterns of the protagonist, Napoleon, reflect the typical speech of high school students when they are frustrated and angry. Furthermore, when Napoleon speaks, it is relatively easy to hear the stressed syllable that is also lengthened. Other teen movies with similar dialogs, such as *Mean Girls* (2004), *Clueless* (1996), *Princess Diaries* (2001), or *Juno* (2007) could be used instead of *Napoleon Dynamite* because the characters use a lot of stresses and accents when speaking.

Preparation

Step 1: Go through the video beforehand and choose one or two short dialogues you feel demonstrate good examples of timing, stress, and intonation in spoken English (similar to the dialogue in Appendix 1). You do not need to go through the whole movie; many good dialogues can be found in the first 20 minutes.

Step 2: Transcribe the dialogue for the chosen scene(s).

Procedure

Step 1: Warm up by posting an image of the main character, Napoleon Dynamite (or another character from the movie you are using), and ask students:

- Which three words do you think of when you see this picture?
- Do you think this person was popular in high school?
- Go over the answers with the students.

Step 2: Distribute the script for the scene you have transcribed and play the short dialogue (2-3 sentences). Tell students:

- Listen to the following dialogue and underline the syllables that are being stressed.

Step 3: Ask students:

- *How does the character feel? How do you know that? What noises do they make?*
- *Which words/syllables are being stressed?*
- *What happens to the speed of the sentence?*

Step 4: Review the answers together with the students. Use graphic intonation arrows on the words that need to be stressed. Explain that, in spoken English, frustration is usually characterized by a long *ugh*, *gosh* or a sigh that has a low pitch, as if someone is punching you in the stomach. In these words, the stress is lengthened on the first syllable and the intensity is stronger. *Gosh* becomes *gggggaaawwwwsh* and *ugh* becomes *uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuugh*. Also explain that sometimes, in spoken English, *want to* and *what you* become *wanna* and *whatcha*. Furthermore, these phrases are real English slang, used when people speak English to their friends and are never said

slowly but only when the sentence speed is fast.

Step 5: Activate the students' schemata by asking preview questions before showing the next clip, in order to promote comprehension. Ask students to:

- Read the following dialogue and mark the syllables that should be stressed following the prosodic pattern of frustration.
- Then, show the video clip you have chosen and review answers with the students.

Step 6: Tell students to:

- Choose a partner and read through the same dialogue using the same prosodic pattern as the character in the movie.
- Explain they do not need to act like the character whose part they are reading, but instead should focus on trying to follow the prosodic patterns of frustration.

Step 7: Ask for volunteers to perform their dialogue. Bring in some props or costumes to put on the students to make them look like the characters they are playing.

Conclusion

Even though prosodic patterns in Japanese are very different than those in English, prosodic patterns of spoken English are often overlooked by teachers and not taught to students. Therefore, Japanese students greatly benefit from direct and explicit instruction on prosodic patterns found in English. This lesson is a fun and engaging way to explore these aspects of the English language, one that students generally find very amusing.

Reference

Coon, J., Covel, S., Wyatt, C. (Producers) & Jared Hess (Director). (2004) *Napoleon Dynamite* [Motion Picture]. United States: Fox Searchlight Pictures.

Appendix

The appendix for this article is available online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/2010_02b.pdf>

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

TV comedy carried over to the classroom

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Quick guide

Keywords: Vocabulary, review, game, pop culture, motivation, ad-lib, singing, fun

Learner English level: All

Learner maturity level: All

Preparation time: 5 to 10 minutes

Activity time: 15 to 30 minutes

Materials: A vocabulary list, *My Sharona* by The Knack, a device for playing music, access to YouTube (optional)

Similar to *Saturday Night Live* being mimicked in Monday's classes in America, Japanese students also mimic television comedies. In the mid-1990s, Ru Oshiba entertained by speaking in half-English half-Japanese sentences to get the giggles. Between 2005 and 2008, Japanese TV taught children the pelvic thrust of Hard Gay and the OPAPI dance of Yoshio Kojima. Edo Harumi was one of the comedy successes of 2008 with her *Goo!Goo!Goo!* and a trademark thumbs up. The *Goo* is katakana wordplay for both the English word *good* and the present progressive word ending *-ing*. She currently stars on variety shows and plays multiple games using Katakana English. For some vocabulary review fun, to motivate learners, and to increase fluency, teachers can adapt TV comedy to the classroom. The following game is an adaptation of one of Edo Harumi's games to practice vocabulary. Grammar adaptations are also possible.

Preparation

If YouTube is available, set up your class for a quick opening video. If not, you need a CD player, *My Sharona*, and a vocabulary list. Before the class, write down a phrase that can be sung with the song. Students should be able to insert both the vocabulary word and a word ending in *–ing*.

Procedure

Step 1: Make a vocabulary list from a unit being studied. Have the students study and practice the words so they can pronounce them quickly.

Step 2: In a review class, play an *Edo Harumi* YouTube video or *My Sharona* to get the energy level of the class up. Tell the students to take out their vocabulary lists. It's game time!

Step 3: Write your phrase on the board. I used "_____ is where we are _____-ing!" and "_____ is what we are _____-ing!" These sentences worked well for the nouns we were studying.

Step 4: Model a round for the students. Have the students shout out a word. As the teacher, try to put the word into the phrase in rhythm with the music. For example, "(A) bakery is where we are eating!" or "(A) vehicle is what we are driving!"

Step 5: Play the song two or three times and let students play the game in pairs or small groups. Although not crucial for lower-level students, higher-level students have to try to keep their speaking in rhythm with the song.

Step 6: (Optional) If your students enjoy clowning and laughing, have half of them line up near the front of class. An audience member shouts a word, and the next person in line briefly thinks on it. Then the song is played and they try to speak fast enough to stay in time with the song. After that, the audience shouts another word and the next student tries.

Follow-up

After the activity, model more phrases using other words. To illustrate proper pronunciation, ask the students what the *Goo!* means. They should answer with *good* or *–ing*. Next, mention that in speaking the final *g* is dropped.

Conclusion

To finish the lesson, I usually end with a few *–ing* sentences to cement the *My Sharona* song in the students' minds so they can't get that song and my lesson out of their heads for the rest of the day. I have used it in TOEIC classes as well as speaking classes. Higher-level students know the proper pronunciation, so the game is purely for laughs. Students of all levels learn the joy of quick thinking and word association. Overall, students seem to enjoy this game as it brings Japanese pop culture into the English classroom. Comedy may be foolish, but that is what makes it fun. Adapt a bit of comedy to bring a bit of fun to the end of a lesson. It may bring you back to your youth and closer to your youths.

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

Promoting professional development: Knowing yourself

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Quick guide

Keywords: Professional development, knowing yourself, views, attitudes, beliefs, metaphor

Learners: Teachers, teacher trainers (supervisors), administrators

Preparation time: 5 minutes or less

Activity Time: 20 to 30 minutes

Materials: Paper, chalkboard

Although My Share usually targets students, this activity is designed for teachers, teacher trainers, and administrators. Educators agree that professional development is crucial to

improving teaching effectiveness. As devoted professionals, many of us read journal articles to keep up with research, attend conferences, and communicate with colleagues. However, we are often busy preparing classes, grading papers, and performing administrative tasks. In what follows, I describe a professional development activity that uses metaphor as a means to reveal our preconceived ways of thinking. This activity, which I first experienced at the Hunter College summer program in New York, does not require lengthy preparation time or many participants, and may be used in either small or large groups. I introduced this activity at a small group faculty meeting in which members had different specialties, worked in different fields, and taught different types of students. It became quite a learning experience to know how others thought of their teaching situations. At the same time, it served as a warm-up activity that helped activate productive discussion. This activity can also be used as an icebreaker to break down barriers among workshop participants, create a positive atmosphere, and motivate active participation.

Preparation

Step 1: Think up words related to teaching, for example: *classroom*, *teacher*, *students*, *teaching*, *learning*, or *instruction.*

Step 2: Create incomplete sentences using the vocabulary from Step 1 as subjects, for example: *A classroom is …, A teacher is …, My students are …*

Step 3: Decide on the sentences you will use for this activity while considering your time allocation and focus.

Procedure

Step 1: Write the term *metaphor* on the board and discuss the following questions:

- What is a metaphor?
- When do you use metaphors?
- What are some common metaphorical phrases or expressions?

Step 2: On the board, write the example sentences you developed in the preparation stage. For example:

- A classroom is a …

- A teacher is a …
- My students are…

Ask participants to write down and complete these sentences using metaphors. Example answers I have received include:

- A classroom is a *jungle, blank canvas, ocean, nest, stage.*
- A teacher is a *mother hen, actor, clown, lighthouse.*
- My students are *bees, ants, buds, young leaves.*

Step 3: Ask volunteers to read aloud and clarify their complete sentences. They should explain their thinking behind each choice of metaphor. Elicit questions from the group and encourage the sharing of ideas.

Step 4: Next, ask participants to discuss their metaphor choices, what they represent or imply, and how they reflect their vision, style, and beliefs.

Step 5: Finally, ask participants for their thoughts on this activity, including what they learned.

Conclusion

Metaphors are a primary mode of mental operation (Lakcoff & Johnson, 1980). They define our reality, the way we think, experience, and behave in our everyday lives. In this regard, this activity can serve as a tool for revealing our beliefs, attitudes, emotions, experiences, and circumstances as a teacher. These attributes are often formed unconsciously and become the basis of our teaching practice, which includes choosing materials, delivering instructions, interacting with students, and evaluating students and ourselves. This activity can also reveal our current psychological condition, such as stress levels and how satisfied we are in our work. Knowing ourselves and analyzing our beliefs and practices objectively becomes a solid and powerful foundation for improving the quality of our teaching practice. Moreover, sharing and reflection time provide a valuable opportunity to learn from other educators. This activity contains various possibilities to bring us to more effective and coherent teaching.

Reference

Lakoff, G. Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

A cooperative, content-based vocabulary activity

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Quick guide

Keywords: Vocabulary, cooperative learning, exchange, retain, recall

Learner English level: Intermediate, but adaptable to any level

Learner maturity: High school and above

Preparation time: 30 to 45 minutes

Activity time: 30 to 40 minutes

Materials: A set of approximately twenty vocabulary cards on the lesson topic. Each student will receive one card.

The following activity combines two cooperative techniques to help students learn difficult vocabulary required in a university content course: *Introduction to World Issues*. The techniques adapt Kagan's cooperative learning structures *Quiz Quiz Trade* and *Numbered Heads Together* (Kagan, 1994). In the steps explained below, students help each other understand and retain new vocabulary. As the whole class is interacting, class cohesion and trust are strengthened.

Preparation

Step 1: The teacher should prepare approximately 20 vocabulary cards (as shown in the example cards in Appendix 1). On each card the word and the definition are written on the same side. With larger classes, copy a second set of the same cards. With smaller classes, do the activity more than once to use all the cards.

Step 2: The teacher should introduce useful English phrases to start the activity (see Appendix 2).

Procedure

Step 1: The teacher distributes one card to each student.

Step 2: Students should stand up, find a partner, and decide who is A and who is B. In pairs, student A should start by reading their definition to student B, asking student B to guess the word. Student B listens to A's definition and then guesses the word, or if student B doesn't know the word they should ask A for the answer.

Step 3: Student B then reads their definition and asks A if they can guess the word. Step 2 is repeated.

Step 4: Finally, student A and B exchange cards and find new partners.

Step 5: Steps 2-4 are repeated until all students have exchanged vocabulary cards several times and are beginning to recall the words and meanings. This step may take 20-30 minutes depending on the level of your students.

Step 6: For a class vocabulary review, students sit in teams of four and each member of the team chooses a number from one to four. When the teacher calls out a definition and a number, the whole team discusses the word. Then the student whose number is called calls out the team's answer.

Conclusion

Participating in the above structures gives students a chance to experience the cooperative learning principles of positive interdependence and face-to-face promotive interaction as they rely on each other to learn new vocabulary. I have found that students more easily recall and retain words after teaching each other. Students also gain confidence during the review activity, which gives each student a chance to speak out, supported by their teammates. Finally, learning vocabulary helps students develop cooperative skills that they will use to complete end–of-semester team projects.

Reference

Kagan, S. (1994). *Cooperative learning*. San Juan de Capistrano: Kagan Cooperative Learning.

Appendixes

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

A template for mini lessons with very young learners

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Quick guide

Keywords: Young learners

Learner English level: Beginner and above

Learner maturity: Children 3 to 5 years

Preparation time: 20 to 30 minutes (an hour if you need to make flashcards)

Activity time: 30 minutes

Materials: Flashcards or realia for the chosen theme

Introduction

There is a growing demand for teaching English to young children in preschools and kindergartens in Japan. Teachers with little or no experience are being asked to fill this need. Needless to say, teaching very young children is quite different from teaching teenagers and adults, and can be an intimidating task for those new to the job. It can be quite challenging to come up with a fun and effective way of introducing young children to the English language. The following is a template for planning simple and fun lessons for young children. The template is divided into six steps: *Hello*, *Warm-up*, *Present*, *Play*, *Cool down*, and *Goodbye*.

Preparation

Step 1: Choose a theme and establish aims for the lesson. Colors, numbers, animals (domestic and wild), fruits, vegetables and other food items are good places to start.

Step 2: Besides the theme, choose a language focus. Examples might include simple questions and answers such as: *What's your name*? *How old are you*? *How many*? *What is it*?

Procedure

Step 1: *Hello*. Select a song to signal the beginning of class and focus the children's attention on English time.

Step 2: *Warm-up*. Choose a lively song or activity to review previous lessons and burn off a little energy so children are ready to focus on the presentation of new material.

Step 3: *Present*. Present new vocabulary with flashcards, posters, or realia. Practice vocabulary through repetition drills. Present any language items such as question-answer patterns.

Step 4: *Play*. Plan an activity, such as a game or song, for playing in and with the language.

Step 5: *Cool down*. Use a song or story to signal the winding down time.

Step 6: *Goodbye*. Use a song to say goodbye.

Activities for the template

These activities work well with large groups.

- **Command game:** Give commands such as sit down, stand up, etc. Children follow commands.

- **Flashcard handout drill:** While drilling flashcards, hand out the cards to students and then ask for them back individually. For example, say *Cat please*, or *Give me the cat card, please*.

- **Question/answer circle:** Students walk in a circle to music. Periodically stop the music and ask a question to a couple of children standing near you.
- **What do you see?** Post flashcards around the room. Ask, "Children, children, what do you see?" The older children can answer, "I see a (brown) bear." This is especially good when reading Eric Carle's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*.
- **Touch game:** A variation of *Simon Says* for colors, clothing themes, and body part themes. For example, say "Touch something red," or "Touch your socks."
- **Slap mat:** Duplicate your flashcards in a random pattern on a large sheet of paper (B4 or larger). Make one copy for every group of 4-6 children. Laminate the copy, if you can. The children touch the picture as you call it out.
- **Musical numbers:** March around the room in a circle to music. Stop the music and call out a number. Students form a group of that number.
- **Flashcard hunt:** Hide multiples of small copies of your flashcards around the room. Students find them and count the number of each object. (Careful! This can become a bit chaotic with large groups.)
- **Stand up game:** Make multiple mini-copies of each of your flashcards. Give one card to each child. Call out cards. Children holding that card should stand up and sit down quickly.

Conclusion

Your plan is finished in no time and easy to follow. The Appendix lists some resources for songs, flashcards, and activities. Good luck and, most importantly, have fun. If the kids see you having fun, they'll have fun too.

Appendix

Resources

Books

- Carle, E., & Martin, B. Jr. (1995). *Brown bear, brown bear*. London: Puffin Books.

Songs (accessible via Internet search)

- Apricot's *Let's Sing Together* (music only version of most songs)
- OUP's *Let's Chant Let's Sing* series (music only version of some songs)
- *Wee Sing*
- *Songbirds*, from Compass Publishing
- *MPI Best Selection Songs and Chants*

Flashcards

- <eslflashcards.com>
- <mesenglish.com>
- <eslkids.com>

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

A high-frequency vocabulary activity

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Quick guide

Keywords: High-frequency vocabulary, vocabulary activity

Learner English level: Elementary and above

Learner maturity: High school, university, or adult

Preparation time: 5 minutes

Activity time: 15 to 20 minutes

Materials: Handout (see Appendix)

Nation's 1,000 and 2,000 word level vocabulary tests can be used to determine whether or not learners know high-frequency vocabulary (Nation, 2001). After administering these tests to my first-year university students, I discovered that

many of the lower level students did not know a majority of the high-frequency vocabulary items. In order to remedy this, a variety of activities were done both in and out of class. One of the more popular vocabulary exercises was a modified activity taken from Klippel called *Jigsaw Guessing* (Klippel, 1987, p. 49) where learners were required to guess random vocabulary from hints and use letters from that vocabulary to make a "mystery word." In this activity, however, only high-frequency words were used. This activity not only requires learners to interact with one another, but also allows for creative thinking, thereby making it more enjoyable than the usual fill-in-the-blank vocabulary exercises.

Procedure

Step 1: Pass out a copy of the handout to pairs or groups of students. Stress that all the words used in this activity, including the answers, are only from the high-frequency words that have been studied in class.

Step 2: Explain to the learners that they must find out the answer to the statements on the sheet to discover the mystery word. There are seven different sets. In each set there are four statements. Each statement requires a one-word solution. The first letter of each of the four solutions will make up the set word. The first letter of each of the set words will make up the seven-letter mystery word. The letters may need to be unscrambled to figure out the set word and the mystery word.

Step 3: Use *Set 1* from the Appendix or your own original idea to model an example on the board for the learners. See the example below:

Set 1

- The day before today is _____. (**y**esterday)
- Food from a chicken. _____. (**e**gg)
- Something you do on bicycles and horses. _____ (**r**ide)
- When two cars hit each other it is an _____. (**a**ccident)

The first letters of each solution: Y E R A

Set Word: 365 days = **Y**EAR

Remind learners that the first letter of each of the seven set words will give the solution to the mystery word.

Step 4: Once the students have understood the task, have them try to find the mystery word.

Variations

Another way to do this activity is by making it a jigsaw activity.

Put students in groups of seven, and give each learner a piece of paper containing only one set rather than all seven. Each student figures out the set word and then shares the answer with the rest of the group and assists other students with their puzzles. The first group to find the mystery word wins the vocabulary challenge.

To make it an entire class activity, each student can be given a piece of paper with one set on it; as soon as a student finds the set word, they write it on the board, and then assist other students in finding their solution. The class then finds out the mystery word together.

Conclusion

Nation (2001) suggests that high-frequency words are so important that a sufficient amount of time should be allocated to them by both teachers and learners, and anything that helps the students to remember the words is worth doing. That being said, the memorization of 2,000 words can prove burdensome to many learners. Hopefully this activity will aid learners in reviewing some of the words they have been studying in a way that is not only educational, but also challenging and entertaining, and shows learners that the journey to learning can be achieved in more ways than just rote memorization.

References

Klippel, F. (1987). *Keep talking: Communicative fluency activities for language teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix

The appendix for this article is available online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/2010_02d.pdf>.

Interactive introductions

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Quick guide

Keywords: Introductions, cooperative learning, active listening, personalization, open and closed questions

Learner English level: Beginner to intermediate

Learner maturity: Junior high school to adult

Preparation time: 5 minutes

Activity time: 20 to 50 minutes

Materials: Whiteboard, blackboard, or OHP

At the beginning of a new school term, many instructors will be looking for ways to capitalize on the curiosity of some of their students and make the introductions on the first day of classes more interactive. In addition, many EFL/ESL teachers will want to take the earliest opportunity to demonstrate the nature of communicative tasks in their classroom and set the expectations for learners to participate using the L2. These initial class experiences and first impressions are very important not only to set the tone, but also to lower the affective filter for tense or shy learners faced with a new teacher and unfamiliar classmates. Learners experiencing a foreign language class for the first time or adult students returning to the classroom present additional challenges, especially where the teacher might not be able to (or want to) communicate in the leaners' first language. This activity is designed to set them up for success and allow the instructor to begin to assess the level and needs of the class participants.

Preparation

Select 8-12 points of information about yourself you are happy to reveal and share with your students. The information should be brief and limited to one or two words or numbers. Since the students will build their closed questions around these details, care should be taken to include topics that require a range of different words for forming questions (see Appendix 1 for topic samples).

Procedure

Step 1: Write out the answer stems from Appendix 2 on the right side of the board or on an OHP transparency.

Step 2: Elicit the open ended Wh- questions that fit the stems and record them on the left. Elicit additional Wh- questions.

Step 3: In pairs, have the students ask and answer the question-answer sets.

Step 4: Promote active listening by then having the students introduce their partner to another pair. If remembering content proves difficult, repeat Step 3.

Step 5: Elicit words that begin yes/no closed questions and record them on the board or OHP.

Step 6: Present the 8-12 topics for your introduction on the board or OHP. Have students work in groups of 3-6 to write closed questions that they believe will receive a *yes* response based on your introduction.

Step 7: Have each group in sequence ask questions from their list to earn points in a team game. Points are awarded based on correct question forms that get a *yes* response from you. Depending on the level of the class, you might write out their questions next to the words from Step 5.

Step 8: Each student then prepares a list of 3-8 of their own personal introduction topics depend-

ing on the time available. Ideally, students would move around the room to meet **their new class-**mates and introduce themselves using questions and answers based on these topics.

Extension

Lower level classes may need to preview the grammar for the third person structures required in Step 4 and can also benefit from repeated trials according to the time available.

The initial steps can be tailored to higher class or individual levels with a focus on liaison and elision in natural speech, or can be supplemented with a range of production tasks including additional questions, such as *What is your first name/nickname/major?*

Common errors in grammatical form or natural English can be collected and reviewed afterwards to demonstrate how corrections in communicative activities can be dealt with during the course.

Points of culture or lifestyle can be explained in your answers or introduced for follow up

discussions as appropriate for the level of the class.

Conclusion

Along with the scaffolding provided through collaboration with peers in group work while preparing the questions, this activity includes (a) the elicitation of current knowledge, (b) guided pair work exercises, and (c) an approach for managing corrections. The questions are also adaptable for interaction at different learner levels and provide for varying degrees of personalization. These interactive introductions also afford students the opportunity to pick up interesting details about their teacher and classmates, giving them something to build upon further in future communication tasks during the term.

Appendix

The appendix for this article is available online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/2010_02e.pdf>.

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

Run and read

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Quick guide

Keywords: Four skills, pair work, reading

Learner English level: Mid-beginner to high-intermediate

Learner maturity: Any

Preparation time: 20 to 30 minutes

Activity time: 30 to 45 minutes

Materials: Four copies of a reading text at learner-appropriate level, question sheets, adhesive tape, one pen/pencil per pair of students

The purpose of the activity is to have students skim and scan a level-appropriate text, and then pass on what they have read to a classmate. The classmate then records the information. This means each student will be required to use all

four language skills during the course of the activity.

Preparation

Step 1: Make four photocopies of the reading text. Remember to enlarge the copies so that they can be read from a distance.

Step 2: Make a list of 10-14 questions based on the text. The activity will be done in pairs, so an even number of questions will allow both partners to answer the same number of questions.

Step 3: Make photocopies of the questions. Students will share the question sheet with a partner so the number of photocopies required is equal to half the number of students in the class.

Step 4: Tape the four text photocopies on the

walls of the classroom. Spread the texts around the room evenly.

Procedure

Step 1: Have students pair up with a partner and have each pair sit at one desk.

Step 2: Hand out the question sheets to each pair.

Step 3: Show students that there are four copies of the text which contain the answers to the questions they have been given.

Step 4: Explain the activity by demonstrating with a student.

• For the odd-numbered questions, partner A will be the *runner and reader* while partner B will be the *secretary*. For even-numbered questions, the roles will be reversed.

• For question 1, partner B (the secretary) will read the question aloud and A will run to the wall to skim/scan for the answer.

• After finding the answer, A will quietly tell B the answer. B will write the answer down. If B is not sure of the spelling or pronunciation, B will ask for clarification. Student A can go back to the wall to confirm the spelling or details, if necessary.

• Then, the roles will reverse for question 2. B will run and read while A acts as secretary.

Step 5: Students complete the questions one at a time until all the questions are answered. Remind students to tell their partner the answer quietly and to ask for clarification if needed.

Extension

For homework, or in-class work, have students read the entire text together and review the answers done in the activity. Depending on students' abilities, a written summary could also be assigned.

Conclusion

Many times students appear to be wedded to their dictionaries when reading and not too concerned with the overall themes and main ideas of a text. *Run and read* endeavors to have students break away from their dictionaries and engage a text in a unique way. This article presents but one way to teach students skimming and scanning skills. In addition, this activity allows students to express what they have read, convey the material orally and understand the material both aurally and in writing.

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

A speaking activity in connection with the movie, *School of Rock*

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Quick guide

Keywords: Rock, band, travel, concert, tour, American cities

Learner English level: Mid beginner to low intermediate

Learner maturity: High school and up

Preparation time: 15 minutes (if you know the film)

Activity time: 30 minutes (plus 2 hours if the film is viewed)

Materials: Pictures of rock bands, DVD/video of *School of Rock* and handouts (see Appendixes)

Movies are an effective language-learning tool. It is important to find a film that students will enjoy. Most students enjoy comedy because the plots are usually simple and there are plenty of visuals. *School of Rock* is a funny and light film that takes place in a classroom. A rock artist transforms private school students into rock-and-roll kids. Creating a speaking activity from the film enhances student comprehension and

stimulates conversation. This speaking activity is meant as a follow-up after students have viewed the film, and is a gap-fill in which three groups use information provided to extend the story.

Preparation

Rent a copy of *School of Rock*. Before you show the film, describe the meaning of rock-and-roll and show picture examples. Write the names of the major movie characters on the board and describe them. During the film, you may want to stop frequently and provide comprehension questions or crossword puzzles to keep the students interested in the film. Before the class in which you do this activity, copy and cut in half enough paired letter handouts (see Appendix 1) for the class.

Procedure

Step 1: Put the students into pairs. Tell the students they are members of the band from the film, and they are going to travel across the country on a concert tour. The tour is broken into three *legs*, and three pairs must combine their information to complete the leg.

Step 2: Give each pair a copy of the gap-fill tour schedule (see Appendix 1). There are nine pairs in total (three groups of three pairs), and each pair has an A half and a B half. Each pair will need to get all the information about their particular leg of the tour to complete the comprehension quiz later.

Step 3: Model the activity for the students. Tell them they must move around the classroom and ask other students for the missing information on their handout. Students will receive one of two answers, *I don't know* or the correct answer. Once the students complete their information, they sit and wait for further instructions.

Step 4: The teacher hands out comprehension questions to each student in each pair for their particular leg (see Appendix 2). This handout contains questions about the information each pair obtained in Step 3. For each pair, partner A receives the corresponding A handout and partner B, the B handout. Tell each pair to answer every question.

Step 5: Write the answers to all questions on the board. A copy of the answers is available in Appendix 3. Students check their answers and hand in their completed tour schedule and comprehension questions.

Note: There are 18 dates on the tour. This means that 18 students can participate. If there are more than 18 students in your class, simply give the same handouts to extra pairs. If you have fewer than 18 students, give combined handouts to selected pairs, or complete only part of the tour.

Conclusion

Students must interact with each other to complete the tour schedule, so therefore this becomes a whole-class activity. All of the four skills are involved: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Student reactions are usually very positive. They are eager to find the information and look forward to the second half of the activity. You can also provide students with A4-sized US maps. This allows them to get a better understanding of the location of the cities they visit. Finally, the students can also identify more closely with the film, its characters, and theme.

Appendixes

The appendixes for this article are available online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/2010_02f.pdf>.

Three days in paradise: Planning your own vacation as an EFL exercise

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Quick guide

Keywords: 4 skills, project-based learning, student-centered, authentic materials, e-learning, geography, CALL, Internet

Learner English level: Intermediate to advanced

Learner maturity: High school and university

Preparation time: 2 hours

Activity time: 8 to 10 hours

Materials: PC, Internet connection, PC projector, screen

While looking at a *New York Times Travel* slideshow, I realized my students could make something similar. They had a great time learning how to plan a vacation to a foreign country—in English. I went with a simple 2 nights/3 days and no budget format, but they did need to report the cost (i.e. airfare, accommodations, and food). Students presented their vacations in pairs with a simple slideshow.

Preparation

Step 1: Make a sample presentation. For expediency, I stuck with my hometown. (My travelogue can be viewed by going to Yahoo Travel. Click "Travel Plans and Journals" in the Research tab drop-down menu. Then search for "Bucolic Oregon").

Step 2: Create a worksheet describing the project, along with presentation guidelines (see Appendix for an example worksheet), and the script of your presentation.

Procedure

Step 1: Show students your sample slideshow presentation. Give students a sample script describing the daily schedule, where to stay,

what to eat, do, etc. Allow time for questions at the end.

Step 2: Have students choose travel partners and discuss what is important for a good vacation (e.g. beautiful beaches, good shopping, museums, amusement parks, etc). Teach the necessary discussion phrases so they can define their vacation criteria and choose a location.

Step 3: Students choose a destination. As this is only a short trip, I recommend they limit themselves to a small region or city. *New York Times Travel* should give them plenty of inspiration (see <travel.nytimes.com/gst/travel/36hours.html>). Also *Yahoo Travel* (see <www.YahooTravel.com>) will give them access to an interactive world map and photos of users' recent vacations.

Step 4: Once they have a destination, they will use *Yahoo Travel* to help them locate everything they need: airfare, accommodations, attractions, restaurants, etc. Students should organize all their information on note cards, which they'll use during their presentations.

Step 5: *Flickr.com* has an exhaustive collection of images for their slideshows. Students should download their photos onto a PC desktop folder and rename them "photo1," "photo2," etc. so that they can be automatically arranged in chronological order. Their first image should be a map of their destination. For Windows PC users, to show their presentation, click the "slideshow" feature on the left drop-down menu of their folder.

Step 6: Now that the students have their note cards and their slideshow, they should be ready to present. Remind them again on the English to be used in their presentation. Tell the rest of the class to listen for key information and ask questions.

Step 7: As a final step, students should write up their presentation. I like to do this last, as a

follow-up to the presentation, so that students don't read from their paper as a script during the presentation. There are many formats the written piece could take depending on the ability level of your class: brochure, travel article, journal, etc.

Conclusion

The project achieved three main goals: (a) using all four skills, (b) learning about the world beyond the classroom, and (c) planning a trip to get there. My students went shopping in Istanbul; visited Santa Claus at his headquarters in Northern Finland; and learned how to meringue in the Dominican Republic. In sum, we all had a great vacation from traditional learning.

Appendix

The appendix for this article is available online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/2010_02g.pdf>.

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

A future tense picnic

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Quick guide

Keywords: Future tense, sentence formation and completion
Learner English level: Advanced beginners
Learner maturity: High school or adult
Preparation time: Minimal
Activity time: 15 to 20 minutes
Materials: Board and markers

This activity can be used to review or practice the future tense form (going to). What makes this activity interesting for the students is that there is a secret rule, which is chosen by the instructor or classmates. The students try to guess the rule by suggesting items for a picnic. The activity is appropriate for both large and small classes. It is best played in groups of four or five students to allow for maximum participation.

Preparation

Step 1: Write the following sentence on the board: *I'm going to go on a picnic and I'm going to bring _____.*

Step 2: Determine in advance what the secret rule will be for modeling the activity. For example, in order for the students to be allowed to go on the picnic, their answers must begin with the same first letter, such as B. Other examples of a secret rule could be that all of the answers must be sports items or clothing.

Step 3: Decide in advance how the class needs to be organized for modeling the activity. Students can organize their chairs in a circle or, if the class is quite large, ask for or choose a few volunteers to model the activity.

Procedure

Step 1: Have the students sit in a circle.

Step 2: Explain the sentence on the board and review the vocabulary *picnic* and the grammar structure for future tense (used for a planned future activity). Practice pronunciation if necessary.

Step 3: Check that the students understand what a picnic is and elicit examples of where people might go for a picnic and what they might bring.

Step 4: Explain that this activity is about a picnic and about what people might bring on a picnic, but that there is a hidden rule. The students must listen to the items and try to guess what the rule is. If they guess the rule, they can continue to participate, but they must keep the rule a secret.

Step 5: Explain that each student will have a turn to complete the sentence on the board/overhead projector with an item that they would like to bring on the picnic. After each sentence, you, the teacher, will state whether or not they can bring their item on the picnic.

Step 6: Read the sentence with an answer that begins with B. The following is an example: "I'm going to go on a picnic and I'm going to bring a baseball." Tell the students that you can go on the picnic because you are going to bring a baseball.

Step 7: The student next to the teacher on either the right or the left must make a sentence, generating one item that he or she would like to bring on the picnic.

Step 8: The teacher listens to the sentence and uses the rule to decide if the student can go or not. In the model above, a student bringing *bananas* can go, but a student bringing *apples* cannot.

Step 9: The teacher continues around the circle until most of the students have guessed the rule.

Step 10: At this point the teacher can elicit from the students who are participating and watching (if you have a large class) what the rule is.

Step 11: Once all of the students understand the game, divide the class into groups of about four or five students each. Then, choose a student in each group to start the activity, or each group can elect a student to start. The student who starts the activity must think of a new secret rule before they start. Each student should have at least one turn at creating a rule and each student must create a different secret rule.

Step 12: Circulate and monitor the groups.

Conclusion

This activity is one that requires very little preparation and generates interest by having students guess a secret rule. It is a simple high-interest activity for practicing the future tense.

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

Ad Talk

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Quick guide

Keywords: Ads, magazines, discussion, speaking
Learner English level: Intermediate to advanced
Learner maturity: University
Preparation time: 15 to 20 minutes, depending on available resources
Activity time: Up to 60 minutes
Materials: Photocopies of print ads from magazines or the Internet

I've found that a lot of academic oral communication textbooks lack relevant prompts for discussion among my students. I'm always looking for interesting ways to supplement the course material. One topic my students seem to enjoy discussing is *advertising*. What makes an ad effective? Who are the advertisers trying to attract? How does advertising influence our spending habits? In the following activity students explore these questions and share their ideas in a fun, stimulating learning environment.

Preparation

Magazines such as *Rolling Stone*, *Details*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *GQ* have an abundance of thought-provoking advertisements. I like to use ads with few words and a lot of bold imagery. If you don't have access to print magazines, *Adflip.com* is an excellent source of old and new magazine ads you can print out.

Procedure

Step 1: Start this activity by showing the class a print ad for a popular product: Coke, McDonald's, Apple, Microsoft—something the students will immediately recognize and react to on a personal level. First, have them identify the product, and then ask them to describe the ad. What do they see? I want them to give as many details as they can. They can use single words or whole sentences, as long as they're contributing.

Step 2: Ask what they think is the ad's message. For example, *what does the rugged cowboy on the prairie suggest about Marlboro cigarettes?* After

that, ask the class about the ad's target audience. Who do they think the ad is trying to attract? Finally, have the students tell whether they think the ad is effective. Does it make them want to buy the product? Why or why not? After several students have spoken, it's time to begin the next part of the activity.

Step 3: Break the students into groups of two, three, or four, depending on class size, and give each group a copy of a printed advertisement. Write four objectives on the board: (1) Identify the product; (2) Describe the ad; (3) Explain the ad's message; and **(4) Discuss the ad's effective**ness. The students have about 15 minutes to accomplish the tasks. If a group finishes too quickly, join them to keep the ball rolling.

Step 4: When the groups have completed the tasks, choose one group's ad for the entire class to look at. Each member of that group will say at least one thing about the ad. After that, open up the discussion to the whole class so everyone can share their ideas. Then move on to the next group, and so on until every group has had a turn. Encourage disagreements about an ad's message or effective-ness, letting the discussion go where it needs to go. This creates a nice lively atmosphere and gets the students thinking critically about the material.

Variation

The process works equally well with TV commercials. If you have Internet access in your classroom, *YouTube* is an excellent source of old and new TV commercials.

Conclusion

I've had a lot of success with this activity, and I'm always gathering new advertisements to share with my students. No matter the medium, it's important to choose advertisements your students can relate to, that will grab their interest and get them talking. By analyzing and discussing an ad's power and effectiveness, students are not only developing their English skills but also discovering important things about themselves and the world they live in. I've found this activity to be a nice diversion from the often bland, dated material contained in many oral communication textbooks.

MY SHARE SPECIAL • ACTIVITIES

Empowering learners with rubrics

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Quick guide

Keywords: Rubric, learner autonomy, brainstorming, self-assessment, presentation, evaluation, feature description, feature categorization.

Learner English level: Pre-intermediate and above

Learner maturity: High school and above

Preparation time: 90 minutes

Activity time: 90 minutes

Materials: Pencil and paper

Reading or listening to a teacher's expectations can be hard for students. In my classes, I have found inviting students to develop their own evaluation structure improves their motivation, interest, and performance in a project. For teach-ers wanting to empower their students by getting them more involved in the learning and assessment procedure, rubrics can provide the ideal mechanism. The goal of this activity is to get your students to first construct a rubric, then use it to score their classmates' 1-minute presentations.

Preparation

The teacher may wish to consider a sample rubric before the class in order to facilitate discussion during construction of the class rubric. An example is provided in the Appendix.

Procedure

Step 1: Introduce the goal of the activity to the students (in this case, 1-minute informal verbal

presentations). The teacher should demonstrate an example of both an ideal presentation, and a poor presentation.

Step 2: Divide the class into several work groups of five or six students each, depending on class size. Students consider and brainstorm what features of the presentation they think are important. The concept of brainstorming may have to be explained.

Step 3: Group members tell the teacher and classmates their findings, group by group. Findings are immediately written up in a list, at the front of the classroom, for everyone to see.

Step 4: Synthesize the target features. *Can hear*, *big voice*, *understand words* and *can understand*, for example, may be synthesized into two features (*volume* and *enunciation*) with a common concept (*clarity*)—see the Appendix. Each group discusses feature categorizations to ensure everybody is satisfied. The teacher may need to be quite involved at this stage to ensure that the target features are evenly represented in the rubric (depending on what is being assessed).

Step 5: The teacher introduces the rubric concept. The teacher demonstrates how each scale can be divided into varying stages of success. *Volume*, for example (see the Appendix), can have four stages, ranging from *poor* to *excellent*. Scales may need further discussion, so that all class members understand the distinction between, say, *poor* and *insufficient*. Groups can expand on this through discussion. It could be important here to emphasize that simplicity would be best, considering that listeners will have limited thinking time during the presentations.

Step 6: The teacher molds the categories into a preliminary rubric through exchanges with students.

Step 7: Classmates prepare and perform their presentations in a second lesson. This, of course, is dependent on class numbers. Students grade their classmates' presentations. Topics (for the presentations) can be selected by either the teacher or the students. I usually give titles 30 minutes before the first presentation. The 30 minutes allow enough time for students to consider structure and vocabulary, and even though some students present after others, they are busy assessing classmates' presentations, so preparation time is equitable. Given this limited preparation time, speech memorization is not important, but the rubric is used to score presentations according to other selected criteria.

Step 8: At the conclusion of the presentations, students discuss the efficacy of the rubric that the class constructed. This can be done in groups, or as a class.

Conclusion

Almost any kind of output can be assessed using a rubric, including essays, stories, presentations, and dialog. Basically, we can use rubrics to mark a wide range of student output that can also serve as an effective feedback form. Students can directly relate their output to a rubric form, thereby improving grading transparency and arguably raising student motivation to autonomously prepare for the task. Rubric development takes time, and presents an opportunity for the teacher to appraise the rationale of the task. We need to ask ourselves what our goal is in any particular situation. What skill set am I asking the student to demonstrate? Do I need to teach a particular skill or requirement that would be reflected in the rubric?

Appendix: *Sample presentation rubric*

Name (being tested):			Clarity		Fluency	Emotion	
Topic:			Volume ボリューム	Pronunciation はっきりした発音	Information Flow 考えの論理的流れ	Appropriate 適切な 感情導入	Attention-grabbing 注意をひくこと
Score	Poor	1					
	Insufficient	2					
	Sufficient	3					
	Excellent	4					

Listeners simply have to tick the appropriate box at the conclusion of the presentation, then add up the score for, in this case, a total out of 20.