

PRATIQUES DE L'ORAL EN CLASSE DE LVE

CREATING A PEN FRIEND'S PROFILE , PARTNERS AND CIRCLE THE SAGE TECHNIQUES

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STAVANGER: follow-up work

For this follow -up work, I have decided to test a cooperative game entitled« Circle the Sages » with a Year 7 class : The theme chosen is : « Looking for the ideal pen-friend »

What does this game consist in?

First you have all of the pupils sitting in work stations. Four of them will be elected to be the sages and will be given information which the other members of the class do not have .

All the pupils have a specific mission. In that particular situation, they have to conduct an interview, looking for the ideal pen-friend.

Why did I choose this activity?

During this time of the year , pupils that age are beginning to know quite a lot of vocabulary on different topics. They also have a good knowledge of questions but some still find them difficult to master, and easily get confused with auxiliaries.

In that particular class, the abilities are really mixed and there have been tensions between some of them which still exist in spite of the talks we have had and the good resolutions they took.

I therefore needed an activity which would enable them to share their knowledge allowing each of them to communicate, ask and answer questions, feel more confident and above all create cohesion.

On the first day, I gave them a handout in which I explained the activity step by step. Four groups were created. Lots of sages volunteered to embody four potential pen-friends but for the mean time I did not say who I had chosen and they had to work inside a group.

Their first task was to discuss and select the necessary information on a hand out I gave them in order to create the profile of their ideal pen-friend . It was tricky because they all had to come to an agreement but they managed to do so.

I also insisted on the fact they should keep it secret and not tell the other groups what profile they had chosen! They were allowed to add other

information to the ones I had given and encouraged to find funny or unexpected ones.

Next, they discussed part of the questions they would have to ask on D- day to be able to interview one of the sages and see if he or she corresponded to the profile they had created.

It enabled the weakest ones to go through lots of material and understand bits they had missed in class. I also introduced some questions words they hadn't seen before (what else? / how many?)

They wrote those questions down and were asked to revise them for the 2nd day.

On the second day, I checked that they knew what questions to ask, and we worked on the remaining questions (likes and dislikes) as well as on some specific vocabulary (food , television ...)

I also gave them a grid to fill in with all the relevant information about the pen-friend they had created. I then picked one from each group to give to the 4 sages the next day. For homework, they were asked to review all the questions and vocabulary.

On the third day, we went through all of it again. They trained in groups, changing partners, practicing all those questions and trying to be as fluent as possible.

I said who I had chosen to be the sages among the many volunteers, explained why and gave them a profile which did not correspond to that of the group they had been working in.

Their mission was to train and be able to embody this particular pen-friend and answer the questions of their class mates without looking at their grid.

I also gave them a second mission which I had not anticipated. Thinking of the reporting activity which would ensue, I realized they would not have anything particular to do, so I decided they would interact with a group

they hadn't worked with previously, and, in turn, ask them questions about the pen-friend they had been interviewing. Obviously, everybody should use the third person singular which would enable each of them to practice both forms : asking and answering questions either in the first person or in the third person singular. Of course I also told the group about this change and told them they would have to report to one of the sages first before reporting to the whole class.

At that stage I also decided to include a subsidiary game called « Numbered Heads ».

It consists in assigning a certain number to each participant. This number will then determine which part they will play (I have tried it with my Year 10 and it worked very well). In that case, there were 5 numbers corresponding to the 5 pupils of each work station. Each number corresponded to the precise questions they would have to ask.

Our Welsh assistant Rebecca Gunn agreed on being present on that day to help the weakest pupils if necessary and to write the different answers on the board at the end of the activity.

One of my colleagues, Christine Hammenthienne, accepted to film the activity. Many thanks to both of them.

At the end of the class there was a mixture of excitement and anxiety, all of them wondering what profile the other groups had designed, and whether they would discover which sage represented the pen friend they had created.

It put some pressure on them but they were eager to practice and demonstrate they could all do it!

How did it work? How could it be improved?

Well, I must say, most of them did a good job. Of course they were stressed by the presence of the video camera. It shows on the video where you have hesitations and gaps. Yet, the timing was good and they managed to do all the activities.

The revising time and questioning period worked well. The groups knew the questions to ask and the sages had learnt their particular profile by heart.

You can still hear some mistakes with the present simple and there are few

“wh- questions” but all of them played their part, even some of the weakest ones whose good will surprised me.

The reporting time could have been largely improved if I had applied the same

instructions to the answering period as to the questioning one, that is to say: one pupil answering precise questions (numbered heads). I didn't! So, as you will see and hear on the video, they were a bit lost and tended to answer the sages'

questions all at the same time which was a bit confusing!

The second problem was the third person singular; « does » frequently becoming « do » and « have » being used instead of « has ». They would have needed more practice on that particular point.

As to the final report to the whole class, they really enjoyed it and managed to give their opinion on who was the best pen-friend and why, which is really satisfactory.

To conclude, it is an activity which I highly recommend. The pupils told me they had appreciated working in groups because it made things more interesting and lively.

Two of the sages even said: « Thank you for choosing me and letting me experience this practice ».

Indeed, they were proud they had tried and mentioned that in spite of the stress they would like to do it again.

In turn, I would like to thank Rebecca and Milica for this tremendous interesting course and all the team of the Erasmus Plus project for allowing me to go and participate in it.

Eliane Moutard

Le billet du comité de relecture présidé par Silvana Turchino Diksa, IA IPR

Points forts : Le travail de groupe semble avoir créé une réelle cohésion et une dynamique de groupe et la vidéo montre des élèves impliqués dans l'activité, curieux de connaître l'identité du sage et en fin d'activité de reconnaître leur *pen friend*.

Dans la partie conception on peut facilement imaginer une énergie de groupe et un travail d'entraide pour parvenir à créer un personnage. Les sages ont un rôle important, crucial même qui permet aux équipes d'avancer dans la tâche assignée. L'enseignant a recours à la différenciation et au travail collaboratif qui créent une dynamique au sein des différents groupes.

Perspectives pédagogiques envisageables : Afin de réactiver les outils dont les élèves auront besoin pour cette tâche, il serait aussi possible de démarrer l'activité par un brainstorming sur les domaines touchant

à l'identité, la personnalité, les goûts etc. d'un correspondant potentiel puis sur les questions à poser pour connaître le profil d'une personne. Tout ceci peut se faire sans trace écrite ou avec une trace écrite ciblée et limitée qui n'empiètera pas sur les activités à suivre.

Pour l'activité **Circle the sages**, une alternative serait d'envoyer 2 membres de chaque équipe vers un sage, ces duos rassembleraient ainsi des informations différentes et rapporteraient lors de leur retour dans leurs équipes d'origine les renseignements collectés au sage de leurs équipes, redevenu simple membre de l'équipe et dont le rôle serait dans cette activité **Jigsaw** de noter dans la grille d'identification les renseignements de leurs camarades sur 2 des 4 sages. Ainsi chaque membre de chaque équipe jouerait au sein de son équipe un rôle actif dans le récapitulatif des renseignements collectés.

Une fois l'activité de jigsaw terminée et les grilles remplies (informations sur 2 sages dans chaque équipe), les élèves de chaque équipe à tour de rôle relateraient les infos au professeur qui reproduirait ainsi la grille au tableau (infos à confirmer ou corriger par l'équipe conceptrice du portrait) pour un vote final du correspondant « idéal » de la classe cette fois-ci.